

“[A]n account of our capture and the most remarkable occurrences”:  
the textual and cultural construction of John Jewitt in his Journal and Narrative

by


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We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

  
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ABSTRACT


The discourse surrounding John Jewitt's captivity at Nootka Sound by the Nuu-chah-nulth (1803 to 1805) is examined in this thesis. Particular attention is focused on the construction of John Jewitt in his Journal, purported written while he was a captive, and his Narrative, ghostwritten several later in 1815. Drawing on the work of Stephen Greenblatt and other literary theorists, this thesis seeks to challenge the hegemonic status of Jewitt's Narrative as a window into Nuu-chah-nulth early contact life. By presenting other disparate stories of the capture of the Boston, the Narrative's authority as a historical document is challenged. It is argued that scholars must recognize the shifting and evolutionary nature of all historical texts. This thesis further asserts that Jewitt's Journal observations must be recognized as refracted through a masculine, English middle-class lens. Similarly, Jewitt's ghostwritten Narrative must be placed within the literary genre of the captivity narrative, and it must be recognized that its author's own conceptions of appropriate American masculinity substantially shaped the Narrative.

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## Chapter 1

The notion of “white savages” has long excited and titillated the imaginations of North Americans and Europeans alike. “White savages” were individuals living among the Indians, ostensibly white but acculturated in Indian ways, most often Europeans kidnapped by Indians. While there is no real way of knowing the exact experiences of these “white savages,” traces remain in written accounts. These accounts have come to be referred to as Indian captivity narratives. Academics have grappled with these stories as both “America’s oldest literary genre and its most unique”<sup>1</sup> and as “encounters across cultural lines.”<sup>2</sup> Notably the study of Indian captivity narratives has been dominated by American academics anxious to place them within an American frontier mythology.<sup>3</sup> While this is perhaps a useful exercise, study of the captivity narratives should not be limited to only these studies. Nor should the study of captivity narratives be confined by national boundaries. Academics have also hindered their studies by compartmentalizing the narratives, insisting they must be seen as historical, anthropological, or scientific fact or conversely, as pure fiction. Recently some academics have sought to blur this distinction, but much work needs to be done. Captivity narratives present a unique challenge for historians and literary theorists alike, as they provide glimpses into early

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<sup>1</sup> Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark, Puritans among the Indians, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1981), 3.

<sup>2</sup> June Namias, White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973)

cultural contact and demonstrate cultural fluidity in a very literary form. As such, they should be studied critically as both unique literary texts and as traces of the past.

Not surprisingly, the recent outpouring of work on captivity narratives has largely paralleled the emergence of aboriginal issues and awareness of those issues in the public sphere. That Canadian academics have refrained from examining captivity narratives does not mean that they are solely an American phenomenon or mythological creation. As this study will illustrate, captivity narratives can and should be situated within a Canadian historical context. The absence of Canadian scholarship and the lackluster American scholarship on the subject reflect the general need for more rigorous study. Scholars like Stephen Greenblatt and Edward Said offer challenging ideas about cultural contact that present new perspectives for the study of captivity narratives. In this vein, I aim to follow scholars who have ventured down a thorny, winding path that has been labeled “cultural studies.”<sup>4</sup>

Accepting that all forms of knowledge are socially constructed, and that knowledge constitutes power, I plan to examine the captivity Narrative and Journal kept by John R. Jewitt, a blacksmith captured on the coast of Vancouver island in 1803 by the Nuu-chah-nulth.<sup>5</sup> My project aims to place the unique experience of captivity firmly within the methodology suggested by Stephen Greenblatt. By examining the nature of representative practices in Jewitt’s Journal and Narrative, I plan to explore how they

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<sup>4</sup> These scholars represent literary, historical, anthropological strands of thought. Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Edward Said are just a few.

<sup>5</sup> The Journal and Narrative use the nomenclature “Nootka Indians” or “Nootkans.” The “Nootka” prefer to be known as Nuu-chah-nulth.

operated to construct John Jewitt. In referring to representative practices, I have drawn on Greenblatt's explanation of these practices as "images and image-making devices" that may be accumulated, "not only [are they a]... reflection or product of social relations but...[they are also in themselves] social relation[s]."<sup>6</sup> Representative practices then, are both reflections of the social order and producers of it. By relying on Greenblatt's methodology, I hope to shed a different and perhaps more illuminating light on the stories of cultural contact afforded by the captivity experience than the works discussed below.

Predictably, much of the historical literature about Indian captivity narratives is colored by Eurocentrism. This bias reverberates through some of the works that follow, while in others it silently underpins the argument. Most of the works in the forthcoming discussion suffer from this shortcoming. Some may feel that this is an obvious point to belabor but it must be explicated. As the captivity narratives were written by non-aboriginal people the texts themselves can never truly reflect aboriginal voices. My point is that scholars who have sought to address the narratives have not attempted to examine their own biases, or the biases within the text and have often erroneously assumed that the biases within the text reflect reality. Regrettably, much of the literature discussing captivity narratives that follows, rather passively accepts the melodramatic platitudes and innuendoes of the narratives. Some even allow the ethnocentric ethnographic pronouncements within the narratives to become fundamental assumptions that underpin their whole study.

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), 6.

Perhaps the most extreme example of such assumptions, is John Heard's study entitled White into Red (1973). As the title suggests it is a study designed to examine a process Heard christens "indianization."<sup>7</sup> Another study that follows Heard's Eurocentrism and acceptance of captivity narratives as fact is Laura Ulrich's 1982 study entitled Good Wives. Her "captives" chapter concerns itself with the white women who were taken captive, overlooking the substantial role their captors had in shaping their experience.<sup>8</sup> Like Heard, Ulrich accepts existing narratives as evidence of exactly what occurred in the past. Positing that the captivity narratives present a direct window into the actual captivity event of long ago is problematic. Ulrich and Heard passively accept the captivity narratives as historical evidence, without recognizing their status as texts created within a certain historical milieu. Neither Ulrich nor Heard question who wrote the narratives, under what influences, when they were published, or how the texts may have been altered through the years.

Although James Axtell's work sharply diverges from Ulrich's and Heard's in many respects, it nonetheless continues to present narratives as historical fact. Axtell's

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<sup>7</sup> Using quantitative methods and relying on stereotypes, Heard attempts to draw conclusions about the "inherent essences" that make the races different. Not only does Heard accept a diverse range of captivity narratives as scientific facts without question, he blatantly propagates stereotypical concepts of native/white relations. His primary objective to assess when "indianization" occurs is fundamentally problematic as it assumes that cultures have fixed boundaries. This dichotomy also homogenizes both aboriginal and non-aboriginal players, resulting in caricatures of the native as noble or ignoble savage, and white Europeans as agents of the march of civilization.

<sup>8</sup> Ulrich's chapter does open with some suggestive ideas that could have been productively explored. Ulrich begins by explaining that, while ministerial literature discussed captivity as a journey of salvation through trials, in actuality, "captivity was sometimes a journey toward a new home, a new occupation, new friends and family, or at the very least toward earthly experiences little imagined in the farms and villages left behind." The idea that European women were released from the constraints of Western society when taken captive is provocative, but at the same time it does suggest that the "noble savage" stereotype continues to have credibility.

1975 publication entitled “The White Indians of Colonial America,” relies on captivity narratives to explain why Europeans chose to live among the Indians and conversely, why Indians did not choose to adopt European ways. Though James Axtell’s study neglects to examine the textuality of the narratives, it does attempt to provide an illuminating and thorough account of both cultures involved in the captivity experience. Axtell intends to examine why Europeans “ran away from colonial society to join Indian society, by not trying to escape after being captured, or by electing to remain with their Indian captors when treaties of peace periodically afforded them the opportunity to return home.”<sup>9</sup> In this way he seems to be seeking a slightly more sophisticated answer to John Heard’s question of why “whites” would choose to become Indians.<sup>10</sup>

Even with its flaws, James Axtell’s study is a seminal work on the native captivity experience. Axtell was one of the first scholars to examine anthropological sources as well as traditional historical sources in an attempt to shed light on aboriginal involvement in the captivity experience. He was also one of the first scholars to place the captivity narratives firmly within American history. A testament to his influence may be that nearly all of the historians and scholars discussed below have drawn on Axtell’s work.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> James Axtell, “The White Indians of Colonial America,” in The William and Mary Quarterly. (Vol. 32, 1975), 56.

<sup>10</sup> Although Axtell’s study does offer a detailed investigation of Native culture as reflected by the captivity narratives, he is not entirely successful. Axtell’s interpretation of Native input into the captivity process, and the cultural contact that the captivity experience afforded, is oversimplified and somewhat sentimental. In his attempt to sympathetically report what happened, he presents Native culture as good, and European culture as bad. His conclusion that European captives stayed with their captors because “they found Indian life to possess a strong sense of community, abundant love, and uncommon integrity,” is simplistic and in keeping with noble savage imagery.

<sup>11</sup> Colin G. Calloway’s article entitled “Simon Girty: Interpreter and Intermediary,” ed. James A. Clifton. Being and Becoming Indian. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1989) draws from Axtell’s work and in doing so suffers from similar faults. Calloway’s article explores the life of a much-mythologized white captive by the name of Simon Girty, or “white savage Girty.” Calloway accepts Girty’s narrative

All of the previously discussed works accept the captivity narrative as a dependable historical source that can be viewed as completely representative of the captivity experience and the captors. This approach seems somewhat anomalous when compared to other scholars of the captivity narrative who have been quick to recognize the textuality of the captivity narratives. Even among scholars who have recognized this, though, there still exists the tendency to emphasize distinctions between factual or fictional narratives. These authors, while recognizing the captivity narratives as a somewhat literary form of historical evidence, continue to suggest that there remains a central truth cloaked in fiction -- or alternately, that there is only fiction, with no historical value at all.

David T. Haberly, in his article "Women and Indians: *The Last of the Mohicans* and the captivity tradition," presents the captivity narrative as literature alone. By relying on a distinction between factual narratives and fictional narratives, Haberly does not appreciate the literary aspects of what he calls "actual narratives." Focusing on James Fenimore Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans* as literature, and treating narratives published by returned "captives" as truth, is problematic.<sup>12</sup>

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as a reliable source without seeking any kind of context. Not surprisingly, he does not explore how the text of the narrative may have been altered through time. Calloway's portrait of Girty takes a distinctly functional perspective, as he only seeks to explore Girty's actions as a political intermediary.

<sup>12</sup> Haberly's study interprets why captivity narratives were written, and in doing so hints that these texts have changed as their historical context changed. "The frontier between fact and fiction was often very vague indeed, and it is sometimes difficult today to separate the authentic accounts of redeemed captives from the works of writers eager to make a quick buck by milking a well-established market."<sup>12</sup> Had he explored this idea further, he would have been confronted with the discovery that the line between fact and fiction in captivity narratives is not a clear line, if there is a line at all. Indeed, Haberly might have discovered that the "authentic" accounts of redeemed captives were often aided by "writers eager to make a quick buck." David T. Haberly, "Women and Indians: *The Last of the Mohicans* and the Captivity Tradition." *American Quarterly*. (Vol. 28, 1976).

Although Haberly focuses on literature, many scholars have recognized the blurring of literary and historical accounts and have sought to study captivity narratives as both a form of literature and as a historical document. Even among these scholars, most emphasize either the literary qualities of the captivity narratives or the historical vantage point that they afford. Few have managed to truly marry these elements and move beyond reductive generalizations.

Although it does not quite marry the literary and the historical, Richard Drinnon's study entitled White Savage: The Case of John Dunn Hunter, (1972),<sup>13</sup> and Alden Vaughan and Edward Clark's work, Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption (1981)<sup>14</sup> both offer legitimate attempts. Both rely on interdisciplinary methodology and to varying degrees, both recognize the textuality of the narrative.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Drinnon's study offers an account of the life of John Dunn Hunter, a boy captured around 1800 "somewhere in the Old Northwest,"<sup>13</sup> and grew up with the Osages of Kansas. Upon Hunter's return to "civilized society," he achieved minor celebrity status as a "white savage." Unlike the previous studies, Drinnon takes a methodical step-by-step look at how the narrative of John Dunn Hunter changed, as its historical context shifted. He also examines literary influences that dictated how the captivity was to be written. In addition, the reader is given a picture of the profound influence that the narrative had on the public. However, Drinnon fails to present Hunter's actual captivity experience or his narrative in any detail. Hunter's perceptions of aboriginal people are left unexplored. How Hunter is constructed in his captivity narrative is also left untouched.

<sup>14</sup> Vaughan and Clark's study is a collection of what the authors deem "the best New England accounts of Indian captivity." Like Drinnon, Vaughan and Clark identify the narratives as part of a literary genre. Identifying it as a genre and as a way to learn about the social thought of the Puritans allows them to "treat Puritan captivity narratives as histories of their time as well as an evolving literary form." They explain that when Puritans wrote about their indigenous captors in the narratives, their perspective was "marred by pervasive ethnocentricity." As they assert, authors would have faced a daunting task in attempting to write anything about native culture, based on the restrictions their own culture placed upon them. "Indian ways were shunned, not emulated, "savagery" was feared and despised, not appreciated or respected...captives had little incentive, save their own curiosity or a desire for dramatic detail, to describe native customs."

<sup>15</sup> Like Vaughan and Clark, June Namias maintains that captivity narratives represent a route to Euroamerican thought. In her study entitled White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (1993), Namias examines captivity narratives in an attempt to interpret the meaning behind their gendered and ethnic depictions. According to Namias, the captivity narratives helped Euroamericans struggle through questions of gender and cultural identity in periods of change and uncertainty. While Namias' study is the only work on the captivity narratives that specifically includes gender as an essential analytical tool, she neglects to explore the juxtaposition of gender and ethnicity in the captivity

A more focused look at a captivity narrative is provided by John T. Fierst's article, "Strange Eloquence: Another Look at The Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner."<sup>16</sup>

Fierst's study presents the important role that the final writer of the narrative occupied. Unlike any of the previously discussed works, Fierst's article identifies and briefly explores the imprint of the individual who translated and transcribed John Tanner's Narrative. Fierst not only introduces Tanner's translator, he attempts to trace the relationship that developed between the two men. Although Fierst mentions that Tanner could barely speak English, he credits James with the ability to transcribe exactly what Tanner said or tried to say.

[James'] part in its composition presents challenges for analysis, yet Tanner's account is no less authentic because it was mediated through James's voice. While it would have been impossible for James to leave himself out of the Narrative completely, neither did he take possession of it...we should be grateful that it was James who took down Tanner's story.<sup>17</sup>

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narratives. Her attempts to use ethnographic sources are limited and tend to homogenize aboriginal people. While the study is path-breaking in its use of gender, Namias could have coupled gender and ethnicity as analytical tools far more meaningfully. See Anne McClintock's recent study entitled, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest. (New York: Routledge, 1995)

<sup>16</sup> Unlike Vaughan and Clark, who examine Puritan views demonstrated by the narratives, Fierst focuses on the indigenous perspective in the Narrative. Fierst's article argues that John Tanner's Narrative offers insights into his Indigenous captors' lives. Tanner's early life with the Ottawa is considered throughout Fierst's article. According to Fierst, Tanner's Narrative presents the Ottawa as "real persons in a specific landscape, passing through a specific period in their history." Fierst suggests that the literary structure of Tanner's Narrative is a structure particular to native storytelling. As Fierst writes, "I gradually came to appreciate that there is a structure to John Tanner's Narrative, though it is not a structure typical of story telling in the European tradition. What struck me above all else were its many instances of foreshadowing." Fierst explains that Tanner's Narrative details dreams and visions Tanner experienced while among the Ottawa, experiences which illuminate Tanner's internalization of his experience among the Ottawa.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 230.

While Fierst acknowledges that the “conversations [between author and subject] were probably a mixture of English and Ojibwe” as “James spoke a broken Ojibwe, and Tanner,...had a poor command of English [and] may have spoken in Ottawa,”<sup>18</sup> he fails to concede that this linguistic barrier may have impacted the way that the Narrative was created.<sup>19</sup>

Like Fierst, Katherine Zabelle Drounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier attempt to use a more reflexive approach to illuminate captivity narratives as literature in America. The Indian Captivity Narrative 1550-1900<sup>20</sup> accepts the Indian captivity narrative as both a historical text and as a part of American literature. Stodola and Levernier insist that as such, the Indian captivity narrative is an excellent source to increase our understanding of early cultural contact. Although they focus on one of the canon’s of captivity literature from early America, Mary Rowlandson’s narrative,<sup>21</sup> their study leaves no stone unturned. Despite the strengths of this study, native participants are once again homogenized as “Indians” with no regard for cultural or linguistic difference.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>19</sup> Although Fierst has written an excellent article, several questions remain untouched in his study. Fierst does scratch the surface of the Narrative as a text created in a particular time, but he still places his faith in the text as a window directly into the lives of the Ottawa. He fails to address the issue of the non-acclulturated James transcribing the text from Tanner, who can barely communicate in English. Fierst also neglects to confront the considerable power that “translator” James would have had in shaping the Narrative. Instead he places faith in James’ ability to mediate linguistic and cultural barriers to transcribe Tanner’s story. In addition, Fierst does not acknowledge that existing fashions and literary forms would certainly have shaped how the Narrative came to be written.

<sup>20</sup> Katherine Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier, The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993)

<sup>21</sup> Rowlandson’s Narrative was published in 1682. The Boston and Cambridge edition was entitled The Sovereignty and Goodness of God and the London edition was entitled A True History. As Stodola and Levernier explain, Rowlandson’s Narrative became an overnight bestseller.

A recent addition to the body of work on captivity literature is John Demos' study entitled The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America.<sup>22</sup> Although this study is without the methodological pretension of the previous work, it is influenced by the work of the scholars previously discussed. Demos' reconstruction of the Williams' story is based on diverse source material, and where no sources exist Demos surmises what might have been. Some of the guessing that Demos does regards aboriginal participation in his story. As Demos says in his introduction, "Indians present a deeper more daunting challenge."<sup>23</sup> This is, of course, because the written records that he relies upon for his study are non-aboriginal sources. As such, they cannot present aboriginal voices.

Most of the literature surveyed fails to recognize the inherent limitations of the narratives as historical sources. The narratives were after all written by non-aboriginal people. However, few historians or scholars have emphasized these limitations. Instead many have accepted the pronouncements of those taken captive as true accounts not only of what the captivity experience was like, but also of what their captors were like.

Historians have tended to want to use the captivity narratives as a way of finding out what aboriginal people were really like.

Moreover, most historians who have engaged in the captivity narrative discussion have failed to address the issue of the power of literacy. The written account of the event

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<sup>22</sup> John Demos' engaging story tells of the captivity of John Williams and his daughter Eunice Williams. Set in colonial Massachusetts, the study seems more of a story than a history in the style of the previously addressed works.

<sup>23</sup> John Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xii.

then, becomes what happened. As Stephen Greenblatt explains, writing was part of the “mobile technology of power”<sup>24</sup> that Europeans shared. By writing an event down, a writer could “capture” an incident and shape it however she liked. This is significant for captivity literature as authors recounted and retold their experiences by writing them down and thereby legitimized them. The written word, as an essential facet of the technology of reproduction, could be reread and reinterpreted over and over in many different geographic areas.

Many of the limitations in the captivity literature discussed above may be lessened by drawing on Stephen Greenblatt’s work on discovery literature. Characterized as cultural studies or new historicism, Greenblatt’s work lends critical perspectives to the existing body of scholarship dealing with captivity narratives. As Greenblatt explains, his work on discovery literature assumes textual opacity, that in fact “we are allowed access to the European encounter with the New World chiefly through what De Certeau calls the colonists’ ‘scriptural economy,’<sup>25</sup> and that this scriptural economy, writing, is in itself freighted with meaning. By assuming textual opacity, captivity texts could not be seen as capable of “speaking for themselves.” Instead, they would require contextualization, and even then, only a fragment of the text might be accessed.

Greenblatt also recognizes textual complexity, that “texts...create complex intertwinings of potentially competing discourses.”<sup>26</sup> These complex intertwinings of

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *New World Encounters*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), xvi.

<sup>26</sup> Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, xvi.

discourse are, of necessity, European. Yet, Greenblatt's project is to search for traces of otherness in the European project of writing about the "New World." Throughout, Greenblatt emphasizes that textual authority must be questioned constantly: "the moment that Europeans embarked on one of the greatest enterprises of appetite, acquisition, and control in the history of the world, their own discourses became haunted by all that they could not control."<sup>27</sup>

Greenblatt's contention that discovery literature tells us about "the European practice of representation,"<sup>28</sup> instead of telling us what aboriginal people were really like, is illuminating when applied to the study of captivity literature. Greenblatt's introduction to Marvelous Possessions is also a worthy remonstrance for scholars of captivity literature.

Be very wary of taking anything Europeans wrote or drew as an accurate and reliable account of the nature of the New World lands and its peoples. It is almost impossible, I find, to make this skepticism an absolute and unwavering principle-I catch myself constantly straining to read into the European traces an account of what the American natives were 'really' like -but I have resisted as much as I can the temptation to speak for or about the native cultures as if the mediation of the European representations were an incidental consideration, easily corrected for. At this time and place it is particularly tempting to take the most admiring European descriptions of the 'Indians' as if they were transparent truths and reserve epistemological suspicion for the most hostile accounts, but this strategy produces altogether predictable, if sentimentally appealing results.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Clearly this warning is applicable to captivity literature, as most scholars of captivity literature have done what Greenblatt warns against. Even many of the recent works have sought to speak for native cultures or have uncritically accepted admiring descriptions of indigenous peoples.

Why ideas like those put forth by Stephen Greenblatt have not been applied to the study of captivity narratives is worth pondering. Although Stodola and Levernier claim to use new historicist approaches, they fail to address captivity narratives in any detail and thereby move do not beyond literary generalizations. Perhaps, Greenblatt's ideas, though suggestive, are also unsettling to some. As historians, we are limited by our insistence on the privileged nature of written texts. Historians attempting to study aboriginal culture or history face the challenge of studying a culture that does not privilege written texts. It is not surprising then, that historians have sought to present captivity narratives as a text that can illuminate aboriginal culture. Who better than the "white savages" to speak for aboriginal culture? To concede that the captivity narratives can only truly tell us about European perceptions would seem to limit the study of aboriginal culture.

However, drawing on Greenblatt's work on discovery literature enables scholars of captivity literature to more critically address captivity narratives. Greenblatt's insistence on the complexity and opacity of texts mitigates the problem of accepting the narrative as a text, whether literary or historical. Greenblatt's emphasis on questioning the authority of texts by acknowledging that texts do not merely appear but are created and placed, offers scholars of captivity literature reason to explore how the narrative was

actually created. The pervasive ethnocentrism within many studies may be mediated by adopting Greenblatt's approach which recognizes that European texts (read: captivity narratives) are creations that illuminate European ways of thinking instead of truths about Indigenous peoples. Further Greenblatt's discussion of the power of writing is useful for the study of captivity narratives as a way to understand how these narratives shaped constructions of Indigenous peoples, Europeans, and their contact experience.

Because captivity narratives have occupied a place both as literature and as historical sources, Edward Said's ideas regarding the position of narrative fiction may be suggestive for the study of captivity literature. As Said explains, "stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world...[further] the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism and constitutes one of the main connections between them."<sup>30</sup> Said's ideas about the function of narrative fiction complement Greenblatt's methodology, enabling captivity narratives to be understood both as stories that Europeans told, and as powerful tools of European imperialism.

The gendered and racialized constructions within captivity literature can be recognized and explored by drawing on Homi Bhabha's ideas. Homi Bhabha has illuminated the study of subjectivity within colonial discourse with his ideas about stereotype and ambivalence, so that instead of merely recognizing stereotypes as good or bad, an "understanding of the processes of subjectivations"<sup>31</sup> involved in the creation

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<sup>30</sup> Edward Said, xxi.

<sup>31</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

and promotion of stereotype can be attempted. These processes can then offer a framework for scholars of captivity literature to address the cultural constructions within the captivity genre. Bhabha's discussion of ambivalence has informed my exploration of the ways in which stereotypes maintain their vitality. With Bhabha's insights, scholars can begin to analyze how cultural constructions of subjectivity are created and maintained.

With these tools, and building primarily on Greenblatt's ideas, I plan to examine the discourses of John Jewitt's Journal and Narrative. Published in 1807, his Journal details his captivity by the Nuu-chah-nulth on the Northwest coast of Vancouver Island from 1803 to 1805. In 1815, aided by an American writer named Richard Alsop, Jewitt published a more detailed literary account of his captivity, which he described as "an account of our capture and the most remarkable occurrences."<sup>32</sup> Although Jewitt's Narrative has been edited and reprinted many times, little critical work has addressed it. Instead, scholars have mined it for ethnographic data without addressing its historicity. Both publications explore Jewitt's two year captivity experience, beginning with the capture of his ship and ending with his dramatic rescue.

Jewitt was captured in 1803 by a group of Nuu-chah-nulth living at what is now known as Yuquot. Jewitt and John Thompson, a sailmaker, were the only crew members of the Boston that survived and both became captives of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Jewitt had been employed as a blacksmith aboard the Boston, a British trading ship that was visiting

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<sup>32</sup> John Jewitt, Captive of the Nootka Indians: The Northwest Coast Adventure of John R. Jewitt, 1802-1806, ed. Alice W. Shurcliff, and Sarah Shurcliff Ingelfinger (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1993), 23.

“Nootka Sound” or Yuquot as part of an ongoing trade in sea otter pelts. Established around 1785, this trade ensured that the Nuu-chah-nulth would be in almost constant contact with European traders for the next twenty or so years.

The Nuu-chah-nulth had their first European visitor in 1774 when Juan Perez, Captain of the *Santiago* exchanged gifts with the Nuu-chah-nulth near the the west coast of the Hesquiat peninsula. Their next visitor, Captain James Cook, anchored at Nootka Sound for almost a month to repair his ship. During this time, Cook traded metals for sea otter pelts with the Nuu-chah-nulth which he found could be profitably in China. This began a pattern of maritime trade between the Nuu-chah-nulth and European traders with Yuquot or “Nootka” as a trading centre. Spanish traders even established a permanent garrison at “Nootka” in 1789. However, by the 1790s the sea otter population was in serious decline. By the time that the Boston arrived in 1803, the trade was a shadow of what it had been.<sup>33</sup>

My project begins by presenting differing accounts of Jewitt’s capture and his crewmate’s demise. By analyzing the creation of five disparate stories of the capture, I hope to unsettle the almost hegemonic status of Jewitt’s published Narrative. The next chapter will examine the gender, class and ethnic depictions within the Journal that Jewitt wrote while captive from 1803 to 1805. While accepting that Jewitt’s Journal may offer ethnographic insights, this chapter will examine his observations far more critically as British, white, male and middle class reactions to an “other.” The last chapter will

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<sup>33</sup> Eugene Arima and John Dewhirst, “Nootkans of Vancouver Island,” Wayne Suttles, ed. Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7 Northwest Coast, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 407-408.

examine the more polished Narrative created by Richard Alsop, an American ghostwriter.

A discussion of the pre-existing American captivity narrative genre that structured its creation will be presented with an exploration of its construction of class, gender and ethnicity. The aim of this last chapter is to illuminate the literary nature of John Jewitt's Narrative and to argue that the Narrative is more representative of this genre, and the literary pretensions of its author, than of the Nuu-chah-nulth people.

## Chapter 2

There is no way to truly know how John Jewitt came to be a captive among the Nuu-chah-nulth. To those who know the Narrative of John Jewitt, the story of his captivity begins with his early life in England. Though not widely read, four other competing stories of Jewitt's capture exist. Bearing in mind what Edward Said has called "the power to narrate,"<sup>1</sup> this chapter seeks to challenge the dominance of Jewitt's Narrative by presenting his Narrative account of how the Boston was captured alongside other, often disparate accounts of his capture and subsequent enslavement by the Nuu-chah-nulth. Four written versions of the capture of the Boston are in existence. Jewitt claims authorship for two versions of the capture story; the captain who rescued Jewitt has a story; and a trader named James Rowan also has an account of how the Boston was taken. Finally, Nuu-chah-nulth oral tradition also offers a rendition of Jewitt's capture. By presenting each of these five stories and examining how each was created, this chapter will attempt to unsettle the almost hegemonic status that Jewitt's Narrative representation has long had.

While history has privileged John Jewitt's Narrative account, the other stories of the capture of the Boston may illuminate facets of Jewitt's experience among the Nuu-chah-nulth not yet explored. The very limited currency that the following stories of Jewitt's capture have received makes their presentation imperative. Certainly, Jewitt was a first hand observer, as he claims to have written his Journal while still a captive. But, the act of writing is self-consciously narcissistic, and Jewitt surely had his own reasons

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<sup>1</sup> Said, xiii. See also Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, (New York: Routledge, 1992), introduction.

for writing his account. A certain degree of self-fashioning must admittedly go on when an author writes and publishes an autobiographical account of an experience with the other. Moreover, as Daniel Clayton has argued, “the European model of what counts as truth—that texts are truthful because they are first-hand reports that were written on the spot,”<sup>2</sup> is bound up with cultural relations of power. By presenting conflicting stories of the capture of the Boston, this chapter will attempt to present other voices that may tell us about the captivity experience and the contact that it afforded.

According to John Jewitt in the account he recorded in his journal, A Journal Kept at Nootka Sound by John R. Jewitt, one of the Survivors of the Crew of the Ship Boston, during a captivity among the Indians from March 1803 to July 1805, the story begins with the arrival of the Boston at Nootka Sound on March 12, 1803.

We arrived in Nootka Sound the 12th of March, 1803, all in good health and anchored five miles above the village in twenty-five fathoms water, muddy bottom. On the 13th the natives visited us and brought a plenty of fresh salmon, which we purchased for fish hooks, &c; on the 14th our people were on shore getting wood and water for the ship. The natives visited us with a number of canoes round the ship. On the 15th Maquina, the chief came on board to dine with the captain. After dinner the captain made him a present of a double barrel musket, with which he was much delighted and went on shore. Our people were employed as usual until the 19th when the chief came on board with nine pair of ducks as a present to the captain, and told him that the double barrel musket was not a good one, and that he had broken the lock; captain Salter was very angry, called him a liar, took the musket and threw it down into the cabin and called for me to know whether I could repair it. I told him it could be done. The chief returned to the shore very angry and the captain took no more notice of what had happened. On the 22nd the chief came again on board, looked much pleased, had a mask over his face and a whistle in his hand, seemed to be very happy and asked the captain when he should go to sea; “Tomorrow,” replied the captain, “Why don’t you go to Friendly cove and fish, there is plenty of salmon there,” said the chief. The captain spoke to Mr. Deliewser and they agreed it would be a very

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Clayton, “Captain Cook and the Spaces of Contact at “Nootka Sound,” Reading beyond Words: Contexts for Native History, ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996), 120.

good plan to get a stock of fresh salmon to carry to sea. After dinner the captain dispatched the jolly boat with Mr. Deliewser and nine of the people. The steward was on shore washing the captain's cloaths; the sail maker was in the main hatches at work upon the sails; I was in the steerage cleaning muskets. About one hour after the boat was gone, the captain told Mr. Ingraham to hoist in the long boat, saying there was a sufficient number of the natives on board to help to pull at the tackle falls to hoist her in. When they had got the boat half way up, the natives seized every man at his tackle fall, and likewise the Captain, threw him over the quarter deck, and killed every man with his own knife taken out of his pocket, and cut off their heads and threw their bodies overboard. Hearing a noise on deck, I went and got my musket, and ascending the stairs was caught by the hair of the head, by three of the natives. One of them struck at me with an axe and cut my forehead, but having short hair, their hands slipt and I fell down the steerage. The chief, observing it was me, for that I was an armourer and would be of great service to him. He ordered his people to shut over the hatch.<sup>3</sup>

James Rowan, captain of the Hazard, an American trading ship, also wrote an account of the capture of the Boston. In a letter dated 12 August 1803 to Jose Arguello, Spanish commandant of the Presidio of San Francisco, Rowan recounts the following story, reportedly told to him by Chief Tatacu<sup>4</sup> at Juan de Fuca Strait.<sup>5</sup>

From this port we touched at Juan de Fuca where we got news from Chief Tatacu that Chief quatlazape had taken the vessel "Boston." After that vessel had been in port four days and the Indian Captain had been with the Captain of the ship, the Indian became very difficult to trade with. The Captain told him that he had traded with many northern chiefs, but that he knew that he did not have the qualities of a chief, and that he appeared to be a very base man (*hombre muy bajo*), to which Captain Piques [Maquinna] answered what in his language means "bad man": The captain took a gun in hand and intimidated him, telling him: "go ashore, impudent fellow." Going to his rancheria, he had all the neighboring Indians called from the Straits of Juan de Fuca to the northern tip of Nutka. They were gathered together at the end of three days, and he left the council to go and

<sup>3</sup> John Jewitt, A Journal Kept at Nootka Sound. (Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>4</sup> It is possible that Chief Tatacu was also called Chief Tatoosh "whose main village was on Tatoosh Island at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca." According to Yvonne Marshall, "less is known about Tatoosh than the other trading chiefs, but he seems to have been somewhat unpredictable in his dealings with Europeans." Yvonne Marshall, "Dangerous Liaisons: Maquinna, Quadra and Vancouver in Nootka Sound, 1790-5," in From Maps to Metaphors: The Pacific World of George Vancouver, ed. Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnson (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), 161.

<sup>5</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, Vol I 1543-1800, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884), 313.

take the vessel. He carried out his plan on the third day, going aboard at 6am and asking permission of the Captain to allow him to dance a ceremonial dance of friendship, since a few days before they had had disputes. To this he [the Captain] responded that it was very good and that he could carry it out according to his own wishes, which he did at 8am, coming aboard with a group of chiefs and dancing on the stern. He [the Chief] ordered all the people to be provided with daggers, so that while they were dancing they could jump aboard and kill everybody, which they carried out, so that at the time he was dancing they were giving presents of sea otter skins to the Captain, and pieces to the sailors. In a short time all the sailors went astern, and, at that time all jumped aboard and killed them without any defense, except two; they gained access to the shop space where they hid. After the ship was taken, they took all the things that were near at hand all that day and night; at 12 noon they found the two sailors who were hidden, and they pierced one's nose with a bayonet and cut his forehead, and the other was not touched; and taking them to their chief, he spared their lives, and they are in that place.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Samuel Hill, the commander of the ship that rescued Jewitt and Thompson, also wrote an account of the capture. His account was presumably based on Jewitt's story. His story below was published in the *Columbian Centinel*, a Boston newspaper, on 20 May 1807.

On the 18th March Maquinnah borrowed a double barreled musket of Captain Salter for the purpose of shooting fowls; he returned on the 19th, bringing several pair of ducks of which he made a present to Capt. Salter; at the same time presented him with the musket and informed him he had broken one of the locks. --Capt. used some very harsh threats on this occasion and taking the musket by the barrel he struck Maquinnah on the head with the breach of the musket. Soon after this Maquinnah and his attendants went on shore;--the news spread through the village of the high affront their king had received;--The Chiefs and warriors assembled on a sandy beach fronting the sea, to the S.W. of the village.--here the nature of the abuse was heightened with all of the effects of savage eloquence--not by Maquinnah; he sat silent and attentive to the orator, who, after he had been set forth the unjust and unprovoked manner in which their king had been treated by Capt. Salter, proceeded to remind them of their fathers and kindred who were slain by Capt. Hannah some twenty or twenty five years past.--He said their spirits cried loudly for revenge, and as yet had never been gratified with the blood

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<sup>6</sup> James Rowan, letter written on August 12, 1803 in Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt while held as a Captive of the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island, 1803 to 1805. ed. Robert F. Heizer (California: Ballena Press, 1975), ii.

of white men. He concluded by observing that now was the time to appease the injured spirits of their forefathers and take revenge for the abuse offered to their King. A deep silence ensued.--At length a warrior named Yahpanetz, rose up, and first offered to make one of the party in the bloody attack. He said he had lost a father by the cruelty of the white men; and now he was ready to revenge his death. His example was followed by another and another, and finally by the whole council except one man, named Topshottah. This chief declared that himself nor his family should aid or assist in the affair; he was accordingly expelled from the council of warriors and despised as a traitor;--but it seems he persisted in his first resolution. The council next proceeded to lay down a plan of operations, which being settled the council broke up...About 10 o'clock in the forenoon of the 22nd March Maquinnah went on board the Boston, attended by a number of his chiefs and warriors; Maquinnah was painted and had a mask in imitation of a bear's head: When they came alongside of the ship they all shouted several times and Maquinnah performed a kind of mystical ceremony with an empty bottle, which he had under his garment: These ceremonies took place in their canoes along side; after this they went on board, and remained very quietly until noon; when Capt. Salter invited Maquinnah to dine with him, which he accordingly did:--While they were at table Maquinnah observed to Capt. Salter that there was a great plenty of salmon in Friendly Cove and expressed his surprise that Capt. Salter did not send his officers and people to take the salmon, which he said other captains had often done;--...The armourer was at work in the steerage, cleaning muskets--the sailmaker between decks repairing sails--the steward on shore washing clothes...the signal was given by Maquinna, who at the same instant seized Capt. Salter, and threw him overboard, where the old women in the canoes along, killed him with their paddles, and he expired, crying out 'Whacosh Maquinnah', while Maquinna looking over the ship's side, laughed at the farce of the old women beating Salter's brains out with their paddles! As for the officers and crew on deck they were dispatched in a few minutes, with knives, there being no opportunity for making resistance in the situation they were placed in, with three or four Indians to every man. Jewitt and Thompson were both wounded in attempting to come on deck, and the Indians immediately shut the hatches, which secured them below.<sup>7</sup>

Jewitt's Narrative, ghostwritten by Richard Alsop and entitled, Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt ; only survivor of the crew of the ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the savages of Nootka Sound: with

<sup>7</sup> F. W. Howay, "An Early Account of the Loss of the Boston in 1803." Washington Historical Quarterly. (Vol. 17, 1926), 284-286.

an account of the manners, mode of living and religious opinions of the natives, offers the following account of the capture.

The next day Maquina came on board with nine pair of wild ducks, as a present at the same time he brought with him the gun, one of the locks of which he had broken, telling the Captain that it was *peshak*, that is bad; Capt. Salter was very much offended at this observation, and considering it as a mark of contempt for his present, he called the king a liar, adding other opprobrious terms, and taking the gun from him tossed it indignantly into the cabin and calling me to him said, 'John, this fellow has broken this beautiful fowling piece, see if you can mend it:' on examining it I told him that it could be done. As I have already observed Maquina knew a number of English words, and unfortunately understood but too well the meaning of the reproachful terms that the Captain addressed to him. -He said not a word in reply, but his countenance sufficiently expressed the rage he felt, though he exerted himself to suppress it...On the morning of the 22nd the natives came off to us as usual with salmon, and remained on board, when about noon Maquina came along side with a considerable number of his chiefs and his men in their canoes, who, after going through the customary examination were admitted into the ship. He had a whistle in his hand, and over his face a very ugly mask of wood representing the head of some wild beast, appearing to be remarkably good humoured and gay, and whilst his people sung and capered about the deck, entertaining us with a variety of antic tricks and gestures, he blew his whistle to a kind of tune which seemed to regulate their motions...the king [Maquina] came up to him [Capt. Salter] and enquired when he intended to go to sea?-he answered tomorrow.-Maquina then said, 'you love salmon-much in Friendly Cove, why not go then and catch some?'-The captain thought that it would be very desirable to have a good supply of these fish for the voyage, and on consulting with Mr. Delouisa it was agreed to send part of the crew on shore after dinner with the seine in order to procure a quantity. Maquina and his chiefs staid and dined on board, and after dinner the chief mate went off with nine men in the jolly boat and yawl to fish at Friendly Cove, having set the steward on shore at our watering place to wash the captain's clothes. Shortly after the departure of the boats I went down to my vice-bench in the steerage, where I was employed cleaning muskets. I had not been there more than an hour when I heard the men hoisting in the long boat, which, in a few minutes after, was succeeded by a great bustle and confusion on deck. I immediately ran up the steerage stairs, but scarcely was my head above deck, when I was caught by the hair by one of the savages, and lifted from my feet; fortunately for me, my hair being short, and the ribbon with which it was tied slipping, I fell from his hold into the steerage. As I was falling, he struck at me with an axe, which cut a deep gash in my forehead, and penetrated the skull, but in consequence of his losing his hold,

I luckily escaped the full force of the blow.<sup>8</sup>

The oral account of Jewitt's capture was recorded by the aural history division of the British Columbia Provincial Archives in 1978. Peter Webster from the Nuuchahnulth village of Ahousat, recounted the story of how Jewitt was captured as it had been told to him by his "old man." The account below is the edited version of Webster's story as transcribed by Efrat and Langlois and published in an article entitled, "The Contact Period as recorded by Indian Oral Traditions."<sup>9</sup>

According to my old man's stories about Jewitt and Thompson, the Indians in that time, they couldn't pronounce the name right. This Jewitt was called *cuwin* and Thompson was called *tamsin*. When the ship [Boston] was murdered. The Indians displayed their half load of fresh spring salmon which was caught that morning. They pretended to try to give fish to these ship people. They must have all had weapons, that's what they call it, the adze today. They all got on deck. There's one to one, one Indian between one white man. Too bad these white people didn't realize or suspect these guys, what they were doing you know. I guess they had the weapons on the right side, because they had them hidden. Now they killed all the men that started looking around in the ship and there were two men found way down below mending sails. That must have been Jewitt and Thompson. And I believe these two white men knew that the Indians were up to something. They begged them not to be killed. Then, these two men were handed over to the head Chief Maquinna. Well, these two men, Jewitt and Thompson, they became slaves. They were under command of Chief Maquinna then. They'd do anything that they were told to do because they didn't want to get hurt, or be killed. And shortly after they became slaves and Chief Maquinna put on a potlatch party, to have the whole village as witnesses of Maquinna's ownership of these two white men, what we call *mamlni*. They were given places where they could sit peacefully when they were invited by anybody from the village of Yuquot. That's his name for that village, Yuquot. These two men, as they were under orders from Chief Maquinna, learned how the Chief Maquinna

<sup>8</sup> John Jewitt., A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt; Only Survivor of the Crew of the Ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the savages of Nootka Sound: with an account of the Manners, Modes of living and Religious Opinions of the Natives, (Middletown: Loomis and Richards, 1815), 19.

<sup>9</sup> While Efrat and Langlois's written version is very close to the original taped account, they have removed Webster's discussion of fish preservation techniques, and his discussion of the meaning of the word Yuquot. These editorial changes reflect Efrat and Langlois' shaping of Webster's oral account.

family preserved their food, such as fish and seal meat. They started helping the family, smoking fish and saving fish eggs. They got to know what manners the Indians had in Yuquot.<sup>10</sup>

So begin five stories recounting the taking of the Boston, and the beginning of John Jewitt and John Thompson's experience with the Nuu-chah-nulth. Each account tells a slightly different version of the capture of the Boston. As Stephen Greenblatt reiterates, "there are textual traces-a bewildering mass of them-but it is impossible to take the 'text itself' as the perfect, unsubstitutable, freestanding container of all its meanings."<sup>11</sup> Having read five distinct stories about the capture of the Boston, it should be clear that accepting one story as the "perfect, unsubstitutable, freestanding container of meanings" is problematic. Moreover, having read five accounts of how Jewitt was captured, it should be evident that each disparate account offers insights into Jewitt's capture not perceptible from one account alone.

Each of the five stories was created in a different way, and in temporally and geographically separate places. Following Ian MacLaren's advice that "a sharp focus must be directed onto the writer...[to] investigate such customary reading practices as those that equate the explorer/traveler with the author, and published observations with exact representations of reality as it was experienced,"<sup>12</sup> the origins of each story will be explored. MacLaren's study, "Exploration/Travel literature and the Evolution of the

<sup>10</sup> Sound Heritage Vol VII, Captain Cook and the Spanish Explorers on the Coast: Nut;ka. (Victoria: Provincial Archives, Aural History division, 1978) ,60-61.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "The Circulation of Social Energy," in Culture, Power, History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory. ed. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 505.

<sup>12</sup> I.S. MacLaren, "Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author," International Journal of Canadian Studies 5(1992), 40.

Author,” offers four stages that a text progresses through in its development into a finished text. The first stage he describes is fieldnote or logbook entry, “which is written en route. It marks the first effort by the traveler to mediate experience in words.”<sup>13</sup> The next stage is the journal, “the writing up of the travels either at their conclusion or following a stage of them.”<sup>14</sup> It is at this point, according to MacLaren, that the writers’ awareness of readers “vitaly conditions the narrative.” Audience becomes the central difference as the journal moves to the third and fourth stages of text development. The third stage is draft manuscript and the final is published book

Based on MacLaren’s categories of text evolution, Rowan’s letter might be a good starting point. Written “en route” but also written with a specific audience in mind, his letter could be considered at a stage between fieldnote and journal. Rowan’s letter was written with a specific audience in mind; his intention was to communicate with Jose Arguello, the person to whom his letter was addressed. There are no records to indicate that Rowan’s letter was published, or that Rowan considered publication of his letter. Dated 12 August 1803, six months after the capture, Rowan’s letter seems to have been written to recount the story of the capture of the Boston to a fellow trader, perhaps as a warning for his fellow trader.

Rowan situates himself as a traveler passing news and stories along to another traveler. Explaining his sailing difficulties, he describes reaching Juan de Fuca and hearing the story of the Boston from an Indian chief named Tatacu. In his account, Rowan tells the capture story as an impartial observer relating a story he heard. While

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

not attempting to situate himself in the story directly, he does relate it with considerable detail. That Rowan heard his story from Chief Tatacu of “fuca straits” is possible, as his story contains information about the activities of the Nuu-chah-nulth not witnessed by Europeans. However, Rowan’s story has its discrepancies. For example, his story includes the exact time that the Nuu-chah-nulth first boarded the Boston, and when the ship was taken. Exact times typically would not have been included in aboriginal accounts.

The next most refined account based on MacLaren’s phases is Jewitt’s Journal. Although his Journal was published, it fits MacLaren’s description of the journal stage as Jewitt did seem to write with some sense of his audience. In some ways, Jewitt’s Journal also seems like a field book or log book. The Journal is presented in much the way one would expect a work written surreptitiously and hurriedly to look. Apart from the description of his capture and rescue, most entries in the book are two or three lines long and record mundane daily events. Moreover, Jewitt’s published Journal claims to be a replica of the journal Jewitt kept while he was captive. Entitled, A Journal Kept at Nootka Sound, his story was published in 1807 in Boston, Massachusetts, only seven months after his rescue. A small unassuming book of only 48 pages, the Journal is the only account Jewitt wrote describing his captivity experience.

Jewitt recounts how Chief Maquinna was adamant in his opposition to Jewitt’s journal writing. Yet, Jewitt seemed determined to continue writing:

This being Sunday, went to prayers as usual. Nothing particular has occurred these last two days, during which time I have not had an opportunity to write my

Journal, for our chief has sworn he will destroy it: he always says I am writing about him.<sup>15</sup>

The above quotation presents the milieu in which Jewitt wrote his Journal. Even when Maquinna, the Chief of the local Nuu-chah-nulth, threatened to burn Jewitt's journal, Jewitt vowed to continue writing, albeit surreptitiously. Not only does Jewitt seem to feel compelled to transcribe his experiences, he seems to feel determined to continue even while describing the chief threatening him and accusing him of "writing bad about him."

According to Greenblatt "monuments to writing are built by writers." Jewitt's ability to write was his way of personally dominating the situation. How he interpreted events became the legitimate explanation because it was written and as he recognized, his written voice would outlive him. Emerging from 18th century England, Jewitt would have been familiar with what Greenblatt calls the "technology of reproduction." That is to say, the Journal that Jewitt wrote could be printed many times over and in different parts of the world and be interpreted in many different ways. As part of this European technology of power, writing dominated through its ability to reproduce situations from a Western, non-indigenous point of view.

Given that Jewitt's Journal entry of 20 September 1803 clearly suggests that he was not encouraged by his captors to record the events around him, why Jewitt felt compelled to write should be considered. Perhaps, Jewitt recognized that by writing his story down, he could dominate his captors through history. After all when individuals

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<sup>15</sup> John Jewitt, Captive of the Nootka Indians: The Northwest Coast Adventure of John R. Jewitt, 1802-1806, ed. Alice W. Shurcliff, and Sarah Shurcliff Ingelfinger (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1993), 123.

recount stories, they place themselves at the centre and present unflattering angles as more flattering. European writers had this sense somewhat intensified; as Greenblatt explains, “the narcissism that probably always attaches to one’s own speech was intensified by the possession of a technology of reproduction and preservation.” While this may be an aspect of why Jewitt chose to record his experiences among the Nuu-chah-nulth, it is unlikely that this would have been the only reason.

Instead, Jewitt’s upbringing may suggest why he felt compelled to record his experiences. A literate young man, educated in England in the late 1700s, Jewitt received a better than average education. First attending a common school and then at a more private school in Donnington, Jewitt “made considerable proficiency in writing, reading and arithmetic.”<sup>16</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, reading had become an important facet of English middle-class life. What Davidoff and Hall have called the “culture of the book”<sup>17</sup> spoke to the fact that the English middle class was increasingly literate, often looking to books for diversion and instruction. Books were “instrumental in constructing an audience, and in their responses to the changing world they themselves inhabited were defining what came to be understood as specifically middle-class beliefs and practices.”<sup>18</sup> As Jewitt was raised and educated in a literate middle class that placed books in high regard, it is not surprising that he sought to record his experiences.

Certainly it would seem that writing had established associations with civility in Europe at this time. Samuel Purchas writing in the seventeenth century called writing the

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<sup>16</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 156.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

European's "literall advantage." Purchas was referring to the idea that God had distinguished man from beast by giving man speech and the ability to write. "God hath herein added a further grace, that as Men by the former exceed Beasts, so hereby one man may excell another; and amongst Men, some are accounted Civill, and more both sociable and religious, by the use of letters and Writing, which others wanting are esteemed Brutish, Savage, Barbarous."<sup>19</sup> The European ability to write made them capable of having history.

As an educated person, Jewitt would have viewed recording the events of his captivity as important. If he died in captivity, his Journal would be a way for people to remember him. During his captivity Jewitt also read other journals left by captives before him,<sup>20</sup> perhaps reinforcing the idea that by writing his story, he would not fade into oblivion. Writing would have also been a way for Jewitt to maintain his Europeanness. Forced to adopt the eating habits of the Nuu-chah-nulth, and eventually their dress, Jewitt may have seen writing a journal as a way to maintain his "civility" and difference. By recording the "other," Jewitt could have ensured that he did not become "savage."

While there is no way to know why John Jewitt chose to publish the account he wrote as a captive when he returned to Boston, some reasons may be surmised. According to Edward S. Meany, writing in 1940, "Jewitt saw to it that the above facts and the details of his captivity were preserved for posterity by publishing *A Journal Kept at*

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel Purchas, "A Discourse of the diversity of Letters used by the divers Nations in the World; the antiquity, manifold use and variety thereof, with exemplary descriptions of above threescore severall Alphabets, with other strange Writings," Hakluytus Posthumous, or Purchas his Pilgrimes, (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1905), cited in Greenblatt, 486.

<sup>20</sup> Jewitt's Journal entry for October 24 records the following, "Our chief informed me, that not long ago there were six men ran away in the night...He gave me a book belonging to one of the men that ran away, named Daniel Smith." Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 114.

*Nootka Sound by John R. Jewitt.*"<sup>21</sup> Meany may be correct, but he does not make reference to any personal papers or letters that would prove that Jewitt published the journal for "posterity." Nevertheless, publishing his journal for posterity would seem a likely reason for Jewitt given what has been discussed about his education, and about broader European connections between writing and history.

It is also quite possible that Jewitt chose to publish his Journal for financial reasons. As June Namias has argued in her study of captivity narratives, there existed a well established American market for captivity literature.<sup>22</sup> Captivity literature fed into the insatiable curiosity and appetite of individuals hungry for stories about the Indigenous peoples of the "new world." Although Jewitt did possess a well established trade, he may have seen his experience as a possible source of income and possibly fame. Upon his return Jewitt may have been greeted with much curiosity and wonder. Writing and publishing an account would have maintained this notoriety and would have provided a possibly lucrative income. Jewitt may have also felt that a published story would be a way to explain that he was still a "civilized" white middle class man, that he was not a white savage. By publishing his account, he would also circumvent having to continually repeat his story.

Jewitt's story would also gain credibility by its publication. Publication meant that "the encounter with difference [would then be] domesticated within the conventions of literate, European colonial discourse."<sup>23</sup> Greenblatt describes publication as an aspect of

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<sup>21</sup> Edward S. Meany, "The Later Life of John R. Jewitt," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 4 (1940), 143.

<sup>22</sup> June Namias, White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993)

<sup>23</sup> Walter Ong, "Orality and Literacy," Historical Reflections, 21(Spring 1995, no. 2), 35.

the European technology of power - the power to write.<sup>24</sup> Jewitt's writings would later be viewed as accurate perceptions of the aboriginal people he described. Upon his return, his published Journal could shape what was said about Indigenous peoples, and specifically what was said about the Nuu-chah-nulth.

While Jewitt's Journal seems to demonstrate aspects of both a field notebook and a Journal, Captain Hill's account seems to fit more firmly within MacLaren's category of Journal. Hill's only account of the capture was published in the *Columbian Centinel*, a Boston newspaper in 1807. His sole aim in writing an account of the capture may have been to have it published. His rendition would then have been written with his audience firmly in mind. Hill's newspaper account of the capture was published well before Jewitt's Journal was published. Dated 20 May 1807, Hill's story was published just eight days after his arrival in Boston with Jewitt and Thompson.<sup>25</sup> It has been presumed that Captain Hill's story came directly from Jewitt, but Hill never states this.<sup>26</sup>

Instead, Hill wrote "according to the best information which I have been able to collect on the subject, the following are the particulars relative to the capture of the Boston."<sup>27</sup> Unlike Rowan, Hill was not merely relating an incident he heard, but rather he was retelling a story he heard, verified, and supplemented with facts he was able to gather. In this way, Captain Hill presents himself as part of the story. His account was presumably based on what Jewitt and Thompson had told him, and on what he had heard

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, Marvelous Possessions, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Independent Chronicle of Boston, 14 May 1807 cited in F. W. Howay. "An Early Account of the Loss of the Boston in 1803." Washington Historical Quarterly. (Vol. 17, 1926), 284-286.

<sup>26</sup> F. W. Howay. "An Early Account of the Loss of the Boston in 1803." Washington Historical Quarterly. (Vol. 17, 1926), 280.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 283.

as a trader in the region. As he explains, he heard about Jewitt and Thompson's capture when he first sailed into the area, but "as his first mission was trade" he did not aim to rescue them. However, with his subsequent rescue of Jewitt and Thompson, Hill engaged himself with the story by verifying its authenticity and supplementing it with other information he had presumably collected as a trader.

MacLaren's final stage, the narrative, is best exemplified by Jewitt's Narrative. "It is at this point that travel literature alters most," according to MacLaren, as ghost writers and editors are often involved. Jewitt's Narrative is no exception. It was ghostwritten by Richard Alsop. Published eight years after the Journal was first published, his Narrative is substantially longer and more detailed than his Journal. Beginning with Jewitt's birth, it details how Jewitt came to be a crew member on the Boston, his subsequent captivity, and finally closes with his return to Boston, Massachusetts. The substance of the Narrative was purportedly based on Jewitt's Journal and supplemented with details Alsop learned from Jewitt through interviews. First published in Middletown, Connecticut by Loomis and Richards in 1815, the Narrative had many subsequent printings and editions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the most recent edition published in 1993.<sup>28</sup> Though most reprints and editions of the Narrative have been published in the United States, the Narrative has also been published in England, Scotland, Germany, and Canada.

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<sup>28</sup> According to Edward S. Meany in his article, "The Later Life of John R. Jewitt" British Columbia Historical Quarterly (Vol. 4, 1940), 143-161, there had by that time been 18 editions and reprints of the Narrative. Since his article was published, there have been at least three more editions and reprints.

Jewitt's ghostwriter was a well known member of a literary group known as the Hartford Wits who made no secret of their pretensions to literary greatness. The general aims of the group were to cultivate literary arts and culture in America. According to Alsop's nephew, his uncle's "love of interesting novelties, combined with his philanthropy, induced him to write 'Jewitt's story', a work in which he imitated with some success the style of Robinson Crusoe and of which he procured the publication for the profit of that poor and friendless man without giving his own name."<sup>29</sup> Alsop's authorship of the Narrative is indisputable. Not only was the Narrative written in a completely different style than the Journal,<sup>30</sup> but Alsop's authorship was attested to at the time. As one contemporary reviewer remarked, "the book was prepared for the press by a literary gentleman of Connecticut." The same reviewer referred to this literary gentleman as "our Connecticut Redacteur,"<sup>31</sup> alluding to Alsop's membership in the 'Wits.' Alsop's nephew and sometime editor wrote that the Narrative "was written by my uncle, Richard Alsop, Esquire of Middletown, Connecticut."<sup>32</sup>

While Alsop's nephew does not relate how Jewitt's Journal caught the attention of his uncle, he does relate how his uncle styled the Narrative after Daniel Defoe's famous novel. That ethnographers and historians have mined the Narrative for information is

<sup>29</sup> Karl P. Harrington, Richard Alsop: "A Hartford Wit" (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), 121.

<sup>30</sup> In his introduction to the 1896 edition of the Narrative, the editor, Robert Brown noted, "the style in which his book is written shows that in preparing it for the press he had obtained the assistance of a more practiced writer than himself," A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John Jewitt, ed. Robert Brown (London: Clement Wilson, 1896), 35.

<sup>31</sup> Analectic Magazine, June 1815 cited in John Jewitt, A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt; Only Survivor of the Crew of the ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the savages of Nootka Sound: with an account of the Manners, Modes of Living, and Religious Opinions of the Natives, (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1816) .

<sup>32</sup> Harrington, 136.

ironic given that the Narrative was modeled on a well-known novel. Alsop's nephew said that his uncle, "drew from Jewitt his story during repeated interviews," and "complained of the difficulties he encountered from the small capacity of the narrator," saying, "if he had been a Yankee...I could have done much better."<sup>33</sup> While it is clear that Alsop was frustrated by his narrator's "small capacity" as a storyteller, his repeated interviews with Jewitt would suggest that he had concerns that Jewitt's story be properly related.

Other questions about the Narrative's inception remain. Why Alsop took it upon himself to write the Narrative for Jewitt must be examined. To what end? What were Alsop's personal motives? Perhaps, as Alsop's nephew suggested, his motives were altruistic, procuring "the publication for the profit of that poor and friendless man [Jewitt] without giving his own name."<sup>34</sup> Benevolence may have been a motive, but as a well-known member of a group that had claims to literary greatness, with no real literary works to boast, Alsop may have seen the Narrative as his magnum opus. His decision to style the Narrative after a famous epic novel supports this idea. As such, Alsop would have felt compelled to make the story as appealing as possible, perhaps even by compromising what Jewitt told him.

Jewitt's decision to have a well known literary gentleman rewrite his story was in keeping with conventions of the time. As MacLaren details, the published Narrative stage usually involved ghost writers and editors. MacLaren describes a "sophisticated readership," and explains that "many traveled and explored brilliantly but did not write in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 121.

a fashion that either they or a publisher considered sufficiently literary to lure the interest and purses of a readership.”<sup>35</sup> Although Jewitt did not record how he met Alsop, or when he decided to publish a Narrative, a possible answer may again lie with Alsop’s nephew. According to Alsop’s nephew, Jewitt was a “poor and friendless man.”<sup>36</sup> In such a position, having his story rewritten and republished may have been a possible livelihood of sorts, and perhaps even a way of gaining some fame and friends. Jewitt’s lack of success with his published Journal may have contributed to his decision to rewrite his story. It is possible that Jewitt sought Alsop out and implored him to help him write his story in an attempt to eke out a livelihood.

Jewitt may have also seen the Narrative as a purely literary version of his story - created more to entertain than to relate what happened to him. As a poor and friendless man, he may have seen the rewritten Narrative as another way to make money from his experience. As Mary Louise Pratt described, “survivors returning from shipwrecks or captivities could finance their fresh start by writing up their stories for sale.”<sup>37</sup> Although Jewitt had a well respected trade, as a blacksmith, he may have felt unwilling to settle into relative anonymity.<sup>38</sup> Or perhaps Jewitt’s experience among the Nuu-chah-nulth had

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<sup>35</sup> MacLaren, 42, and Pratt, 86.

<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that descriptions of Jewitt before and after his captivity are markedly different. Before his captivity, Jewitt was described as a normal happy young man. After his captivity, he seems to have been something of an outcast. Other captivity stories offer similar accounts of captives having difficulty adjusting when returned to white society. See Colin C. Calloway’s article “Simon Girty: Interpreter and Intermediary,” in Being and Becoming Indian ed. James A. Clifton (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1989)

<sup>37</sup> Pratt, 86.

<sup>38</sup> There is no way of knowing if Jewitt had fame or notoriety upon his return. Other returned captives were famous upon their return. One example is John Dunn Hunter. See Richard Drinnon, White Savage (New York: Schocken Books, 1972)

made it difficult for him to adjust to life after captivity. As is suggested by descriptions of him as a wandering man, and given the traumatic nature of his captivity.

Possibly the most significant factor swaying both Jewitt and Alsop to rewrite and republish the account would have been their knowledge of the existing literary genre of captivity Narratives both fictional and non-fictional. As mentioned earlier, exploration/travel tales were routinely rewritten by ghostwriters.<sup>39</sup> Also, a tradition of captivity literature was well-established in America. As early as the colonial period, early narratives like Mary Rowlandson's Sovereignty and Goodness of God, published in 1682, appeared in as many as thirty editions. The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion by John Williams (1707), another early bestseller, sold over one hundred thousand copies at the time of its publication.<sup>40</sup> The captivity narrative tradition included "the hundreds of fictitious narratives on the subject" and "the captivity novels of James Fenimore Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, and Robert Montgomery Bird."<sup>41</sup>

Distinct from the aforementioned textual accounts is Peter Webster's oral telling of Jewitt's capture. As Webster's story is not a text in the way that the earlier stories are, MacLaren's categories prove less useful. As Webster noted, his "old man" told him the story of Jewitt's capture. In his telling of the story, Webster does not situate himself as an impartial observer or as a person objectively relating a story. Instead the story of Jewitt's capture as told by Peter Webster, was part of Webster's own personal story. Webster's account of Jewitt's capture, reveals that Jewitt's capture is part of Nuu-chah-

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<sup>39</sup> MacLaren, 43.

<sup>40</sup> June Namias, White Captives, Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>41</sup> Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier, The Indian Captivity Narrative 1550-1900, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 10.

nulth oral history for important reasons distinct from American or Canadian historical or literary trends.

As Julie Cruikshank writes, “Narratives from Native elders, focus less on an event than on a process.”<sup>42</sup> This is certainly true of Peter Webster’s recounting of the story of Jewitt’s capture. The capture story told by Webster is less about a capture than about how Jewitt and Thompson became integrated into a Nuu-chah-nulth village. Webster explains that Thompson and Jewitt learned how Chief Maquinna’s family preserved their food and learned about Nuu-chah-nulth life. Instead of a story that builds to a climax, Webster’s story is about how Jewitt and Thompson became acquainted with “what manners the Indians had in Yuquot.” Though separated temporally from the other stories, Peter Webster’s recounting of Jewitt’s capture vividly presents Jewitt’s capture as a significant event with contemporary importance.

Although Jewitt’s Narrative has been privileged historically as the definitive account of his experience among the Nuu-chah-nulth, clearly other accounts have stories to tell that unsettle the place of the Narrative. This chapter has aimed to challenge the primacy of the Narrative by proffering other stories into the discourse around Jewitt’s capture. The conflicting stories and traces that remain about the capture of the Boston offer a beginning point in addressing the construction of Jewitt’s Narrative and Journal. Jewitt’s Narrative should not be understood as the whole story of his encounter with the Nuu-chah-nulth. Each of the accounts presents a slightly different story of how the

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<sup>42</sup> Julie Cruikshank, “Discovery of Gold on the Klondike: Perspectives from Oral Tradition,” Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History, ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996), 435.

Boston was taken, and each provides thought-provoking documentation about the evolution of texts.

Further, each story offered different reasons as to why the Boston was taken. This question remains subject to discussion. In the foreword of a recent edition of the Narrative, Richard Inglis suggests that the capture of the Boston was a way for Maquinna to “regain his lost position.” According to Inglis, “it was designed to provide Maquinna with a wealth of western goods which he could no longer obtain by trade because of the scarcity of sea otters within his territory.”<sup>43</sup> While Inglis’ reasoning does make sense, his analysis seems based on his own knowledge and assumptions more than historical evidence. Inglis says that portraying the capture as an act of revenge “relegates the indigenous people to reactive roles in history and denies them an active place in the events of the time.”<sup>44</sup> This is simply not so. Suggesting that the Nuu-chah-nulth chose to exact revenge on traders for past wrongs does not deny Nuu-chah-nulth agency in history. Avenging wrongs inflicted on their forefathers is a powerful way for the Nuu-chah-nulth to change their history. Not only does Jewitt’s Journal entry of 6 December 1803 support the idea of avenging forefathers,<sup>45</sup> Rowan and Hill’s accounts of the capture also support this idea.

<sup>43</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, xiv.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>45</sup> December 6: “This day Maquina gave me much information on the causes of the destruction that had befallen our ship’s crew.-One capt. Tawnington, in a schooner, which had wintered in Friendly Cove went on shore with fourteen of his people.-Knowing Maquina and several of the natives had gone to the Wickeninshes to purchase a wife, he went into his house where were several of the natives’ wives, put them into great terror, and plundered our chief of forty skins-immediately returned to his vessel, lifted anchor and went away. Soon after this a capt. Hannah much offended the natives. One of them had been on board his ship, and stole from him a carpenters chissel. The next day there being a number of canoes lying along side the ship the captain fired upon them and killed men, women and children to the number of twenty. The chief being on board jumped from the quarter deck and swam ashore. A little time before, the

The next chapter will discuss John Jewitt's first published account of his captivity with the Nuu-chah-nulth, entitled A Journal Kept at Nootka Sound. It will address the depictions of Jewitt and his Nuu-chah-nulth captors within the text, and suggest that these images must be viewed in conjunction with Jewitt's own conception of his middle-class English masculinity. While not dismissing his Journal's important observations about early contact Nuu-chah-nulth society and culture, the next chapter will argue that Jewitt's observations must be recognized as refracted through his own middle-class English lens.

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Spanish had brutally killed three of their chiefs. They were therefore resolved to have revenge on the first ship they should fall in with, which unfortunate event happened to befall us.”  
Nuu-chah-nulth oral history also supports the contention that revenge motivated the taking of the Boston. See Sound Heritage VII.

### Chapter 3

As a text, Jewitt's Journal is not dramatic, and contains few exotic adjective-filled descriptions of savages. Jewitt is not portrayed as a heroic protagonist, instead the Journal captures the ambiguity of Jewitt's feelings towards his captors. Jewitt's published Journal does contain certain ethnographic descriptions of the activities of the Nuu-chah-nulth that provide valuable glimpses into early contact Nuu-chah-nulth society,<sup>1</sup> however his Journal should be viewed critically. It was after all, a Journal that Jewitt kept while a captive, and presumably revised somewhat for publication. The lens through which Jewitt's observations were refracted should be considered when approaching the Journal. Resisting the "temptation to speak for or about the native cultures as if the mediation of European representations were an incidental consideration, easily corrected for,"<sup>2</sup> this examination of his Journal will not try to find aboriginal voices "beneath" Jewitt's writing. Instead, his volume will be read as a way to understand the gendered and racialized depictions that Jewitt created in his observations of the Nuu-chah-nulth.

As Elizabeth Vibert has argued in her examination of the gendered and racial depictions in Pacific Northwest fur trader journals, "the ideological baggage they [fur traders] carried with them from their British and colonial homes functioned as a kind of coordinating grid in the travelers' encounters with 'the Indian.' The outline of the grid was defined by an imagination which was white, male, middle-class, and British."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, foreword.

<sup>2</sup> Greenblatt, Marvelous Possessions, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Vibert, "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in British Fur Traders' Narratives" Gender and History (8, 1, 1996).

Equally, Jewitt's understanding of his experiences in Nootka Sound was mediated by his pre-existing cultural grid. European cultural meanings were reassessed in his encounters with aboriginal peoples in an attempt to reinforce "civility" and difference from the "savages" and also to shape a place for himself. As a captive and a slave, Jewitt would have been forced to reconstruct his white, middle-class English aspirations within Nuuchah-nulth culture. Certain English cultural dictates would be fastidiously adhered to, even when completely at odds with his surroundings, while others would be discarded. Aspects of his "Englishness" that may previously have been unconsciously a part of him would perhaps have been asserted more consciously.

To begin to explore John Jewitt's Journal, a brief explanation of his background is in order, so that we can understand the grid he used to mediate his experience. Born in Boston, England, in 1783, Jewitt was the son of a blacksmith. His mother died soon after he was born. Of lower middle-class background, his family had aspirations that Jewitt become solidly middle class. Jewitt's father saw to it that he was well-educated, sending him to a common school at Donnington until he was fourteen. He then planned to apprentice his son to a local surgeon, thereby attempting to secure a place for his son in the emerging middle class.<sup>4</sup> Jewitt balked at this, and convinced his father to let him follow in his footsteps as a blacksmith. This description of Jewitt's early life is in keeping with portrayals of the emerging English middle class at this time. According to Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, in their study of the English middle class, "those

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<sup>4</sup> According to Davidoff and Hall, "the early nineteenth-century middle groups were stratified in a gradation of status with sharper divides at certain levels of income...[however] the more affluent provided models for the lower ranks who modified these codes to suit more modest circumstances." Davidoff and Hall, 25. According to their descriptions, Jewitt would have probably been part of the lower ranks of the middle class.

who could muster a modest independence, particularly when motivated by religious enthusiasm, spent their small margin on increasing literacy, widening horizons and extending vision.”<sup>5</sup> Further, middle-class parents sought to provide their children with education and religious principles. This was also a time when young men from economically stable families could experiment a bit more with occupation.<sup>6</sup>

Jewitt’s subsequent decision to go to sea also illuminates his middle-class aspirations. This was after all a time when middle-class “young men were expected to roam, to seek adventure, to go out from as well as return to the home.”<sup>7</sup> When Jewitt went to sea with the Boston in 1802, he was only nineteen years old and had never been outside England. As Davidoff and Hall further explain, “occupations connected to the sea provided another sphere of opportunity for middle-class men.”<sup>8</sup> At a time when masculine identity was increasingly equated with occupation,<sup>9</sup> Jewitt’s decision to join the crew of the Boston would satisfy not only his appetite for adventure, it would enhance his own occupational and therefore economic status.

As Davidoff and Hall argue, gender and class were intrinsically linked in the formation of identity for the emerging English middle class. Jewitt’s conception of himself as a middle-class man linked his manliness with his occupation and demeanor. Occupation became an important facet of masculine middle-class identity as “the imperative...to actively seek an income rather than expect to live from rents and the

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<sup>5</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 405.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 229.

emoluments of office”<sup>10</sup> was the major difference between the middle class and the aristocracy. Moreover, the desire to distinguish themselves from the indolent, leisured, frivolities of the landed gentry was a central concern of the middle class in England at this time.

Instead, the middle class sought to adopt the ideals of industry, honesty and piety. In some respects, these ideals stood as the antithesis of those demonstrated by the aristocracy. Income-seeking activities were viewed favorably as there was a “belief in the importance of new business practices and the benefits which they could bring to the whole community.”<sup>11</sup> When coupled with piety and honesty, the bustle of the marketplace could provide for a proper moral and religious life for the family. Although middle-class men were actively engaged in income-seeking activities, their manliness could remain “a manliness centered on a quiet domestic rural life rather than the frenetic and anxiety ridden world of town and commerce.”<sup>12</sup>

Piety was fundamental to the English middle class, and was usually expressed through religious commitment. “The evangelical revival of the eighteenth century had made a religious idiom the cultural norm for the middle class by the mid nineteenth century.”<sup>13</sup> Protestants of this time were interested in finding ways to create an ordered existence. Religious belief supported a rational way of viewing the world and encouraged commercial pursuits.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 25.

Jewitt's presentation of himself throughout his Journal is consistent with Davidoff and Hall's portraits of middle-class "serious Christianity." According to his Journal, Jewitt constantly prayed for his release, and made regular entreaties to God about other matters. Jewitt's Journal devoted one day a week to a description of going to "prayers for his release" with his co-captive, John Thompson. On 21 August 1803, he recorded an entry that demonstrated this religious faith: "Fine weather; took a walk in the woods with a prayer book, and prayed most earnestly that a ship might come to our rescue."<sup>14</sup> His typical weekly entry regarding the Sabbath was, "Went to prayers as usual for our release."<sup>15</sup> Jewitt's fervent entreaties to God derive from and demonstrate his deep piety, and demonstrate his ardent desire to return to familiar surroundings.

In addition to his piety, Jewitt's emphasis on cleanliness also illuminates his identification with the English middle class. Cleanliness and order became "central parts of middle-class culture" in the late eighteenth century in England.<sup>16</sup> Standard Journal entries by Jewitt include statements like, "employed washing," or "employed washing our clothing."<sup>17</sup> Jewitt's Journal entry of 23 June 1804 recorded his dismay at the depletion of his and Thompson's soap supply. "Employed in washing our cloaths; this day we used the last of the soap we had saved from the ship, so that we are now obliged to wash our cloaths in urine."<sup>18</sup> Jewitt's distress at having to wash his clothes in urine demonstrates his middle-class ideals, and illustrates an example of how these mores were challenged

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<sup>14</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 114.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 119.

<sup>16</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 334.

<sup>17</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 119.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

while he was in captivity. Around the time of Jewitt's captivity, English middle-class families used soap for their laundry, but labourers' families continued to use urine.<sup>19</sup>

Captive in what he called "wilderness," surrounded by people that did not place the same value on absolute cleanliness, Jewitt seems ultra-concerned with maintaining his appearance. This stress on maintaining a fastidious appearance seems somewhat absurd. Perhaps, this emphasis on maintaining cleanliness should be viewed as Jewitt's way to reinforce his "civility."

By conscientiously maintaining a high level of personal cleanliness, Jewitt would not only buttress his inherently "civilized nature," he could also reinforce his distinctness from those around him. These aims would also mutually reinforce each other. It is even possible that Jewitt's commitment to neatness may have been more excessive surrounded by the "savages" of Nootka Sound than when he was at sea with his "civilized" peers, or at home in England. Writing about stereotype as the major discursive strategy of colonial discourse, Homi Bhabha notes, "it is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be *anxiously* repeated."<sup>20</sup> Jewitt's commitment to his middle-class manhood involved such vacillation, as his middle-class manly identity had to be *anxiously repeated* when surrounded by "savages" who unsettled his conception of himself. Certain attributes associated with his middle-class status had to be maintained carefully to reassure himself of his civility, and as a way of distancing himself from his captors.

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<sup>19</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 383.

<sup>20</sup> Bhabha, 66. My italics.

Jewitt's religiosity and concerns for hygiene may both be viewed in this way. His emphasis on both routine prayer and cleanliness may have been a way for him to *anxiously repeat* his English manhood. While both prayer and careful hygiene would have been in keeping with his middle-class values, his careful adherence to these habits demonstrate his insecurity in his surroundings.

This apprehension was also apparent in another facet of Jewitt's appearance: his concern about his attire. On 1 February 1804 Jewitt wrote, "we understand that if no ships arrived next Spring, he [Maquinna] meant to make us go naked like the natives."<sup>21</sup> On 12 September of the same year, Jewitt wrote, "he [Maquinna] informed us that we must go naked like themselves otherwise he should put us to death. As life is sweet even to the captive, and as we hoped soon to be released, we thought it best to submit to their will without murmuring, though it was a very grievous thing to us."<sup>22</sup> Having to go "naked like the natives" may have been grievous to Jewitt because it meant they would be indistinguishable from the natives, thwarting Jewitt's attempt to maintain his distinctness and European norms.

Although "nakedness ...seldom meant the entire absence of clothing," it often referred to "a degree of concealment that to British sensibilities appeared scanty."<sup>23</sup> Jewitt's dismay at having to forego his British attire for native dress probably reflected his sense of personal modesty, a product of his middle-class values. Also, as Vibert

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<sup>21</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 117.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders Tales*, (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 250.

notes, clothing could serve as “a marker of the state of development of a society” with “nakedness or simplicity of clothing intimat[ing] crudeness.”<sup>24</sup>

On 1 December 1804, Jewitt recorded a piteous entry that indicates his sense of loss when faced with a lack of European clothes:

Very hard times. All the European clothes being expended, I am obliged to go almost naked like the Indians, with only a kind of garment of a fathom long, made of the bark of trees to defend me from the inclemency of the weather. I have suffered more from the cold this winter than I can possibly express. I am afraid it will injure my constitution and make me very weak and feeble during the remainder of my life.<sup>25</sup>

Not only is he unprepared for the harsh weather without his clothes, he seems to fear that this period of being “almost naked like the Indians” will emasculate him. Worrying that dressing “like the Indians” will enfeeble him for the rest of his life, Jewitt intimates that his masculinity and civility is closely tied to his middle-class clothing. When forced to “dress as a native,” Jewitt’s virility and his sense of difference from his captors seems threatened.

Although Jewitt’s Journal describes him as having been made a “hewer of wood and a drawer of water”<sup>26</sup> by the Nuu-chah-nulth, he also presents himself as hardworking and diligent in keeping with his middle-class upbringing. Further testimony to this is his pride in the products he is able to make for the chief, as evinced in this passage: “This day I made four harpoons for our chief which much pleased him.”<sup>27</sup> His blacksmith abilities seem to be a source of solace to him, as he takes comfort in the innovative

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>25</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 125.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 127.

implements he is able to create. The Journal makes many references to implements created by Jewitt and to the chief's delight with these items. His Journal records, "employed making daggers; finished one which much pleased our chief."<sup>28</sup> This ability to create inventive implements may relate to his middle-class status, as English middle-class men at this time embraced the importance of innovative technology and approaches.<sup>29</sup>

When Jewitt made a steel harpoon for the chief his creativity and sense of pride was again evident, as detailed in the following passage:

Our chief's harpoon was made of a very large muscle shell, but so thin that as soon as he struck a whale the shell broke. I told him that I could make him a very good one out of steel, and it should be as sharp as a knife...15. Our chief employed trying his new harpoon...he was very much pleased with me for it, and said if he killed a whale he would give me plenty to eat...6...Our chief struck a whale and killed him,...The chief was very much delighted with the harpoon I had made for him.<sup>30</sup>

The above example also illustrates how Jewitt "improved" a traditional Native implement with European technology. Significantly, Jewitt's "new harpoon" for Maquinna used a material of British manufacture, thereby replacing a traditional (read: inferior) material with British (read: superior). Resounding through the previous passage too, is the chief's pleasure with Jewitt for fashioning a more efficient harpoon for him. By describing Maquinna's pleasure with Jewitt's "superior" tool, Jewitt reinforces his own superiority, and the superiority of his British technology in the face of "less-developed" peoples.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>29</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 119.

Jewitt's ideas about these peoples would have been informed by his reading of Captain Cook's voyages.<sup>31</sup> Accounts of Cook's voyages were very popular in England and his journals were read by many people. Cook's portrayals of indigenous peoples varied from sensual depictions of South Sea islanders to harsh characterizations of Maori people. As Daniel Clayton explains in his essay, "Captain Cook and the Spaces of Contact at Nootka Sound," Cook took pains to distinguish among the indigenous peoples he encountered. "Cook distinguished the "Nootkans" from other groups of indigenous people by emphasizing their trading abilities and strong notions of property."<sup>32</sup> Cook's detailed and imaginative description of Nuu-chah-nulth physiognomy, was as follows:

The persons of the natives are, in general, under the common stature, but not slender in proportion, being commonly pretty full or plump, though not muscular. Neither doth the soft fleshiness seem ever to swell into corpulence, and many of the older people are rather spare, or lean. The visage of most of them is round and full, and sometimes also broad, with large prominent cheeks; and above these the face is frequently much depressed, or seems fallen in quite across between the temples; the nose also flattening at its base, with pretty wide nostrils, and a rounded point. The forehead rather low; the eyes small, black, and rather languishing than sparkling; the mouth round, with large round thickish lips; the teeth tolerably equal and well set, but not remarkably white. They have either no beards at all, which was most commonly the case, or a small thin one upon the point of the chin; which does not arise from any natural defect of hair on that part, but from plucking it out more or less...<sup>33</sup>

This portrait may have prepared Jewitt somewhat for his meeting with the Nuu-chah-nulth. Cook's description presents the Nuu-chah-nulth as something very different than himself, as an undifferentiated and exotic "other." Cook's attention to detail suggests that the Nuu-chah-nulth are akin to a new breed of animal or plant just discovered. Perhaps,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>32</sup> Clayton, 104.

<sup>33</sup> John Douglas, ed. A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, Undertaken, By the Command of His Majesty, for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere...Written by Captain James Cook... Vol 2 (London: 1784), 301.

armed with this comprehensive description of the “savages” he was to encounter, Jewitt may have felt less awe when he met the Nuu-chah-nulth.

Jewitt’s portrayal of his initial encounter with the Nuu-chah-nulth does not suggest he was perturbed or awed by their appearance. Writing only, “on the 13th the natives visited us and brought a plenty of fresh salmon,”<sup>34</sup> Jewitt does not detail native physiognomic differences, or imaginatively muse at length about Nuu-chah-nulth. Unlike Cook’s journal, Jewitt’s offered no initial detailed descriptions of the Nuu-chah-nulth; instead he discussed the activities that Nuu-chah-nulth were engaged in, in brief matter-of-fact ways. Most of the Journal depictions of Nuu-chah-nulth are relatively short and lack detail. His observations are not those of a great explorer confident in his own superiority, instead they seem to be comments made by a man unsure of his own future, aware that his fate is not entirely in his hands, and that he is dependent on the good will of the “savages” that surround him.

Rarely do Jewitt’s Journal entries resonate with Cook’s earlier observations. However, on 20 March 1804 Jewitt echoed Cook’s disgust with the appearance of the Nuu-chah-nulth, writing, “our sufferings amongst these savages are incredible, for they are the most filthy people in the world.”<sup>35</sup> As discussed earlier, as a British man of middle-class inclinations, Jewitt viewed cleanliness as a paramount virtue. Any deviation from this ideal of appropriate hygiene would have been frowned upon as irrational and uncivilized. Jewitt’s revulsion at Nuu-chah-nulth hygiene should then be

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<sup>34</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 112.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

seen as reflective of his European standards of cleanliness. This was after all a time when “dirt connoted sloth, [and] cleanliness signified industry.”<sup>36</sup>

Generally, Jewitt did not record scientific descriptions of the Nuu-chah-nulth or spend much time measuring or classifying the Nuu-chah-nulth. Like Cook, Jewitt presents the Nuu-chah-nulth as an undifferentiated mass, “the Nootka” rather than specific individuals. Jewitt’s constant reference to “the natives” presents his captors as a homogenous group. Objectifying the “natives” as an “other,” undeserving of specific mention and undifferentiated, was a way to truly construct the Nuu-chah-nulth as inferior to the British. The reader only learns the names of a few chiefs, and Chief Maquinna who Jewitt referred to as “our chief.” Even when a native man saved Jewitt from drowning he did not mention the individual’s name.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps, this presentation of the Nuu-chah-nulth as an undifferentiated mass may have reflected Jewitt’s status in the Nuu-chah-nulth community. As a slave, Jewitt may have been an object of derision, viewed as someone’s property to be used for work.<sup>38</sup> In this capacity, Jewitt was subjected to ridicule and forced to do arduous tasks. As a Journal entry recorded, “fourty [sic] of the natives threw stones at us, when we asked the reason for so doing, they told us they were only playing.”<sup>39</sup> In another Journal entry Jewitt wrote, “the natives take our canoes when they please, if we say anything to them

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<sup>36</sup> Vibert, 251.

<sup>37</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 124.

<sup>38</sup> According to Eugene Arima, a Northwest coast anthropologist, slaves were at the bottom of the Nuu-chah-nulth social scale and were considered property, to be “owned and used like personal possessions.” E. Y. Arima. The West Coast People, the Nootka of Vancouver Island and Cape Flattery. British Columbia Provincial Museum, Special Publication No. 6 (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services, 1983), 65.

<sup>39</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 120.

they tell us we are slaves and ask us where our captain is, making signs that his head was cut off, which grieves us very much.”<sup>40</sup> Jewitt wrote that he was “employed cutting fire wood. Thompson and myself are the only persons our chief makes do this arduous work.” Jewitt observed, “the natives look upon us like dogs, and drive us to slavery.”<sup>41</sup> This status was reflected in Jewitt recording, “this day one of the slaves died, and he was thrown out of the house as soon as the breath was out of his mouth, which is a custom amongst the natives.”<sup>42</sup>

That Maquinna and his family were the only Nuu-chah-nulth people given names or differentiated from “the natives” that Jewitt spoke of, may have reflected Jewitt’s status as Maquinna’s slave. At the outset of his captivity, Chief Maquinna told Jewitt that he was to be his slave. However, Jewitt seemed to assume that Maquinna would be his protector, as the following passage suggested: “the Chief then took me ashore, and I slept at his house...the natives came around me and seemed to sympathize with my captivity.”<sup>43</sup> Jewitt seemed to misunderstand that as Maquinna’s slave, he would be taken to Maquinna’s home because he was the Chief’s new possession.

That Jewitt’s depictions of Maquinna portrayed Maquinna as a father figure of sorts, supports the idea that he thought of Maquinna as a protector. Jewitt noted and recorded the chief’s actions meticulously. For example, his Journal recorded such observations as, “our chief returned from fishing having had no success was in bad humour” or “our chief out whaling.” Jewitt’s idea of Maquinna as a benefactor is further

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 112.

demonstrated when he expressed surprise when Maquinna did not treat him considerately.

“Very hard times; being forced to give him [Chief Maquinna] our cloaths[sic] whenever he thinks fit to ask for them.”<sup>44</sup>

Jewitt’s descriptions of other, undifferentiated Nuu-chah-nulth people, the “natives,” express a degree of wonder and imagination. At the beginning of his captivity, Jewitt noted “it was curious to see them kneeling down with the butt end of their muskets on the ground; their dress and appearance so singular too-some with eight muskets on their shoulders-some with eight powder horns, and stockings round their necks, running up and down the beach in the greatest consternation...our chief exhibited his child with a masque on his face drest [sic] in a most curious manner.”<sup>45</sup> He also expressed wonder at the Nuu-chah-nulth method of catching and cooking salmon. At times, Jewitt seems impressed by the Nuu-chah-nulth ingenuity, as in the following passage:

I went with our chief fishing. It was very curious to see them strike the salmon with a small rod eighteen feet long with a piece of sharp bone at the end of it. Came home with thirty salmon.<sup>46</sup>

Ambiguity characterizes Jewitt’s perception and descriptions of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Bhabha writes that ambiguity is central to colonial descriptions of indigenous peoples, noting that “colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an other and yet entirely knowable and visible.”<sup>47</sup> This ability to know the Nuu-chah-nulth, yet to present them as other, underlies Jewitt’s descriptions of the Nuu-chah-nulth. Jewitt observes them and fastidiously details their activities at work and at play,

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>47</sup> Bhabha, 71.

demonstrating that they are knowable and visible. Yet, the Nuu-chah-nulth remain firmly other in Jewitt's story. Not only are they a homogenous group, at times farcical, yet dangerous; they are also described as what Jewitt does not want to become. As Bhabha goes on to say, "it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency...[it] produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed."<sup>48</sup>

Examples of the ambivalence inherent in Jewitt's descriptions are legion. He presents the Nuu-chah-nulth as easily frightened, yet also capable of saving him from drowning in the rapids of a river. "Natives fishing" is an almost daily entry. Yet at other times, Jewitt describes his Nuu-chah-nulth captors as lazy. "There is nothing but whale's blubber to eat in [sic] whole village, for the natives are so lazy that they will not go a fishing whilst they have any remaining."<sup>49</sup> Describing his captors as at once lazy and industrious, Jewitt again reveals the limited horizon of his gaze. Jewitt's notions about appropriate industry would have been informed by middle-class ideals which dictated that appropriate industry should be rational, steady and unhurried. His characterization of the Nuu-chah-nulth as lazy while at the same time relating that the "natives [are] fishing, and getting their winter stock of provisions as fast as possible,"<sup>50</sup> illustrates Jewitt's lack of understanding about Nuu-chah-nulth food gathering cycles.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>49</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 128.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 123.

Jewitt's observations judge the Nuu-chah-nulth according to his middle-class sense of proper food consumption. Appropriate consumption for the English middle class was defined in opposition to the lavish consumption of the aristocracy. Perhaps not surprisingly, Jewitt characterized the Nuu-chah-nulth as gluttonous. He described one native as eating "till he puked in the dish."<sup>51</sup> Jewitt repeatedly commented, "they eat twenty times in the course of the day,"<sup>52</sup> to record his disgust with their gluttony.

However, while Jewitt recorded his distaste for Nuu-chah-nulth eating practices, he also observed that food was often scarce. Entries note such hardships as "we have had nothing to eat for two days but nettle stalks."<sup>53</sup> This observation may have related more to Jewitt's cultural values about food than to actual scarcity. Nettle stalks were not seen as wholesome food by Jewitt. At the first mention in his Journal that their European provisions have been destroyed by fire, Jewitt says sorrowfully that they will be forced to eat what the natives eat. A few months after joining the Nuu-chah-nulth, describing his hunger in his Journal Jewitt said, "our chief gave us this day a piece of blubber, which to us, hungry as we were was very delicious."<sup>54</sup> Later Jewitt wrote, "nothing to eat but whale's blubber, which is so disagreeable that we are almost inclined to refuse it, but hunger drives us, and we are obliged to eat it."<sup>55</sup> Forced to eat what he views as disagreeable food, Jewitt says hunger drives him to eat the blubber. Yet there is ambivalence evident in Jewitt's Journal even about this subject. When Jewitt describes enjoying the food, he still asserts that his situation is miserable.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 119.

We now begin to enjoy life much better than heretofore, for we can eat the same provisions as the natives, such as sea cow's blubber, whale's blubber, seal's blubber, porpoise blubber, and in short the oil of those sea animals is a sauce for every thing we eat, even the strawberries and other fruit. But we still think our situation is most miserable, and that we shall have to spend the remainder of our days amongst these savages.<sup>56</sup>

Though Jewitt described his life as having improved, he reasserted that his situation was not good and that the natives were "savages." Even if his life had become tolerable, or if Nuu-chah-nulth food had become palatable to Jewitt, his Journal constantly seems to reinforce his difference from his captors thereby reinforcing his civility.

Often the food referred to by Jewitt was acquired through trade. As Jewitt wrote, "this day I bought some fresh salmon."<sup>57</sup> Reliance on trade was described by Jewitt as something the Nuu-chah-nulth valued long before his arrival. Describing trade with the Nuu-chah-nulth, Jewitt again reflected his feelings of ambivalence toward the Nuu-chah-nulth. He often depicted himself as having the upper hand. "Employed trading with the natives; for one ring I received three salmon."<sup>58</sup> In this transaction, Jewitt traded a copper ring he had made, which he judged to be quite useless, for three salmon, which he judged more valuable. However, his transactions with the natives did not all proceed as smoothly. On May 26, 1805 Jewitt wrote, "Our situation would not be so bad if it were not for the high prices the natives ask for their seal skins."<sup>59</sup> Clearly, the Nuu-chah-nulth were far more astute traders than Jewitt routinely described.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>60</sup> Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in BC, 1774-1890, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 7-23.

Although Jewitt does detail many facets of Nuu-chah-nulth ritual life that ethnologists have relied on as source material,<sup>61</sup> his descriptions, portrayals of rituals, often present the Nuu-chah-nulth as behaving foolishly or dangerously. Derisively calling them “curious farces” Jewitt explains the rituals with a sense of bewilderment and even horror. As Jewitt wrote, “this day the farce ended with a horrible sight. Three of the natives were pierced through the flesh of each side near to the ribs with a bayonet.” Still discussing the “farce,” Jewitt paralleled the Nuu-chah-nulth ritual with Christmas, saying, “this play is performed every year in the month of December, and is their mode of celebrating the praises of their God, and rendering him thanks for all his blessings for the past year.”<sup>62</sup> Inferring that a Nuu-chah-nulth ritual that temporally coincides with a Christian holiday was akin to a Christian holiday is problematic. Jewitt witnessed a ritual that was bizarre and foreign to him, and to make sense of it he made it familiar.

Jewitt’s mention of cruelty were not confined to Nuu-chah-nulth rituals. The following occurrence is a typical entry illustrative of the “cruel nature” of the Nuu-chah-nulth:

Eight of the natives held one of the natives at full length on the ground whilst another crammed his mouth full of stones and rammed them down his throat with a sick [sic]. It was the most cruel murder as ever assailed the notice of Christians and what rendered its poignancy more shocking was that some of them saw the tortures of the others and knew they were to suffer the same.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> These ethnologists have stated that Jewitt’s observations are valuable but that they must be qualified as only the observations of an untrained observer. See for example the introduction to Robert F. Heizer’s edition of the Narrative entitled, Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt While Held as a Captive of the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island, 1803 to 1805. (California: Ballena Press, 1975)

<sup>62</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 116.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

This excerpt is judged most cruel by Jewitt. As a pious middle-class English man, behavior where “some of [the men] ...saw the tortures and knew they were to suffer the same” would have been viewed with horror. Jewitt recounts with disgust that “the savages take delight in hurting our temper.”<sup>64</sup>

Women are virtually absent from Jewitt’s Journal. His only mention of women was as berry gatherers. However, even as berry gatherers women are shadowy distant figures in the text. The Journal tends to focus on the work that Nuu-chah-nulth men did, and only make cursory mention of women. Jewitt’s treatment of women in his Journal is especially notable given that he had a native wife. His Journal somewhat suddenly records, “this day our chief bought a wife for me and told me that I must not refuse her, if I did he would have both Thompson and myself killed...It is very much against my inclination to take one of these heathens for a partner, but it will be for my advantage while I am amongst them, for she has a father who always goes fishing, so that I shall live much better.”<sup>65</sup> No further mention of Jewitt’s wife is made until months later when Jewitt writes, “being sick and downhearted, our chief gave me liberty to dispense with the girl that he had forced me to take for a partner, which I did with great satisfaction.”<sup>66</sup> Perhaps, Jewitt’s reluctance to include women in his observations may have related to his middle-class modesty.

According to Gilbert Sproat, an amateur ethnographer on Vancouver Island, in his Scenes and Studies of Savage Life, “there was a long story also of Jewitt courting and I

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 127.

think, finally abducting the charming daughter of the Ahousat chief.”<sup>67</sup> Sproat’s description of Jewitt’s general behavior, supposedly based on interviews with a Nuuchah-nulth individual who knew Jewitt, depicts him as a jolly fellow. Reading the Journal, the reader does not encounter this same Jewitt. Instead, Jewitt is presented as a serious sober, pious, middle-class English man doing his best to remain civilized. He is presented as clinging to his middle-class virtues for dear life, forced to don Indian attire and take an Indian wife, and resolutely praying to return to “civilized” society.

John Jewitt’s Journal should be explored and addressed as a historical source, but it clearly cannot be plumbed uncritically for evidence about the Nuuchah-nulth. The perceptions and images contained in Jewitt’s Journal would appear to illuminate far more about John Jewitt and his middle-class masculinity than about his captors, the Nuuchah-nulth. Certainly Jewitt’s Journal should be read critically and its observations understood as shaped by Jewitt’s own “cultural grid.” The chapter that follows will address the next incarnation that Jewitt’s story took, his Narrative.

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<sup>67</sup> Gilbert Sproat, Scenes and Studies of Savage Life, (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1898), 5.

## Chapter 4

John Jewitt is best known for his book entitled, A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt. According to his contemporaries, “there is scarce any relation of savage manners which can lay higher claim to authenticity than simple narration. The facts are undoubted.”<sup>1</sup> Jewitt’s Narrative has received similar present-day acclaim. Writing in 1987, Hilary Stewart described the work as an, “astounding story told with simplicity and candor. Equally important is its contribution to our knowledge of the Indian culture of the area.”<sup>2</sup> Published as a glossy coffee table book, recent editions of the Narrative have not sought to challenge any of its assertions about the Nuu-chah-nulth or about Jewitt. The recognition and currency of the Narrative has led it to be read and understood as a window into Nuu-chah-nulth culture and history by ethnographers, historians and the public alike. In an attempt to challenge this reading of the Narrative, this chapter will examine the cultural constructions presented within the Narrative and trace them to its ghost writer, Richard Alsop. While not denying the value of some of Jewitt’s ethnographic descriptions, this chapter will argue for a more critical approach to the Narrative by situating it within an American literary genre and suggesting that this work illustrates aspects of its author’s ideas about American manhood.

As discussed in chapter two, the ghost writer of the Narrative was a member of a well-known literary group, the Connecticut Wits. Richard Alsop styled Jewitt’s Narrative after Robinson Crusoe and seems to have hoped that the Narrative would be its epic

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<sup>1</sup> Analectic Magazine, June 1815 cited in John Jewitt, A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt; only Survivor of the Crew of the ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the Savages of Nootka Sound: with an account of the Manners, Modes of Living and Religious Opinions of the Natives (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1816), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 8.

American equivalent. In the introduction to Richard Alsop, ‘A Hartford Wit’, Karl Harrington wrote that the Wits’ members were, “aristocratic by temperament...attracted to the trappings and prerequisites of privilege, and secretly some of them sort of wished that they could be an American nobility.”<sup>3</sup> Most of the group went to Yale, but Alsop was unable to do so for financial reasons. Though Alsop was well educated, having attended school in Norwich, the early death of his father meant that his financial future was not to be as secure as his fellow “wits.” According to his biographer, he spent much of his life in a variety of literary pursuits, and made his living as a book seller and publisher.

In Analectic Magazine in June 1815, after the first edition of the Narrative was published, a reviewer wrote:

Our Connecticut Redacteur has done much better; by scrupulously adhering to the truth, he has made a book which, while it may communicate a good deal of entertainment and useful information to all classes of readers, it is particularly fitted for perusal of the young; it forms, in fact, a very appropriate companion to Robinson Crusoe.<sup>4</sup>

Notably, the reviewer treats Jewitt’s Narrative as both a literary document, and a document that scrupulously adheres to the truth. As chapter two discussed, Alsop based his story on the Journal and interviews with Jewitt. But, as this chapter will illustrate the Narrative also belongs firmly in a distinct literary genre.

In their examination of the Indian captivity narrative genre, Kathryn Zabelle Stodola and James Levernier argue that around the time that Jewitt’s Narrative was written, attitudes towards Indians were changing in the Eastern United States. While

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<sup>3</sup> Harrington, xi.

<sup>4</sup> Analectic Magazine, June 1815 cited in Jewitt, Narrative, 1816.

Indian captivity narratives had been written earlier as propaganda tools against the British and against aboriginal people, as the East had become more settled and Native people displaced, the latter people came to be viewed more sympathetically.

There had...emerged a sentimental and antiquarian interest in the past and an appreciation for primitive culture inherited from the Enlightenment *philosophes* and reinforced by their Romantic successors, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, and Keats...the Indian ceased to be an object of white hatred and was transformed instead into a symbol of America's national heritage, whose legacy was to be preserved not just in literature but also in sculpture and on porcelain, canvas, postcards, and advertisements.<sup>5</sup>

Indigenous themes were viewed as especially appropriate in light of this cultural nationalism. Coupled with the influence of romanticism, this nationalism encouraged the glorification of the Indian as a part of the National past.<sup>6</sup> Constructing the Indian as part of the past, was also a way for authors to remove the Indian from the present, at least in their literature.

Jewitt's Narrative was clearly situated by Alsop within the American Indian captivity literature genre. Written by an American novelist of sorts, the Narrative reflects the mood and aspirations described by Stodola and Levernier. Alsop had aimed to foster an American literary tradition distinct from European influences. Writing Jewitt's story may have been his attempt at an epic beginning for that tradition. Written by a man intent on creating American high culture, Jewitt's Narrative fits the aims described above. American authors were striving in this period to develop "new world" literary traditions. As Stodola and Levernier write, "the Indian captivity narrative served this function well.

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<sup>5</sup> Stodola and Levernier, 36.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian from Columbus to the Present, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 87. See also Brian W. Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 11-18.

It was decidedly American, and its theme and setting could readily be transferred to Old World forms of writing.” This description aptly fits Richard Alsop’s aims in writing the Narrative.

Further evidence of Alsop’s awareness of the existing literary genre and desire to place Jewitt’s story firmly within this tradition, was the title affixed to Jewitt’s Narrative. The title of the first edition of the Narrative is, A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt; Only Survivor of the Crew of the ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the savages of Nootka Sound: with an account of the Manners, Modes of Living and Religious Opinions of the Natives. Other American captivity narratives boast similarly long and melodramatic titles. That the title of Jewitt’s Narrative mimics other narratives published in this time period in the United States is indicative of Alsop’s placing of the text within the captivity narrative genre. Graphic titles were the accepted accoutrements for American captivity narratives.<sup>7</sup>

Jewitt’s Narrative must be placed squarely in the American captivity literature tradition. Stodola and Levernier argue that Indian captivity narratives in America in the early 1800s were “a means...for preserving historical and ethnological information about the Indian and for illustrating frontier heroism.”<sup>8</sup> Both of these facets are apparent in the Narrative. Alsop presents Jewitt as a heroic protagonist, a man of sensibility, while at the same time, takes pains to detail information about his captors. Alsop’s depictions of

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<sup>7</sup> For example, A Narrative of the Sufferings and Surprizing Deliverance of William and Elizabeth Fleming, (1756), A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson. Containing an Account of Her Sufferings, during four years with the Indians and French, (1796) A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe, of Hinsdale, in New Hampshire (1792) An Affecting Account of the Tragical Death of Major Swan, and of the Captivity of Mrs. Swan and Infant Child, by the Savages (1815)

<sup>8</sup> Stodola and Levernier, 37.

Nuu-chah-nulth physiognomy, cultural rituals, dress, and society may have reflected that he thought they would soon disappear, and that their characteristics should be preserved for study and history.

It would be appropriate to now look into the Narrative, to examine the how the Nuu-chah-nulth and Jewitt were created. Bearing in mind how the Narrative was created and by whom, it will become evident that the characters in the Narrative are reflective of Richard Alsop's own conceptions of masculinity, class and race and fit within the framework proffered by the captivity narrative genre. It should be noted that Alsop's construction of masculinity was not the dominant American model, as his conception favored aristocracy instead of republicanism. Given these facts, it would seem apparent that the discourse of the Narrative is strikingly different than that of the Journal.

As mentioned earlier Jewitt's Narrative is much longer than the Journal he published upon his return from captivity and its tone is substantially different as well. These differences can be attributed to the context in which the Narrative was written and to its purpose. While Jewitt's Journal was written furtively, his Narrative was written by an individual described as a "literary gent" with aristocratic pretensions. Where Jewitt wrote his Journal for posterity, Alsop ghostwrote the Narrative as a literary work ostensibly to help support Jewitt. Written in what Alsop's biographer describes as "neo-classical" style, where "a paraphrase was preferable, thus a gun might be called a 'reeking tube' ...,"<sup>9</sup> Alsop wrote Jewitt's Narrative in a literary form to create his chef d'oeuvre.

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<sup>9</sup> Harrington, xii.

To begin to examine the constructions within the Narrative, it is necessary to consider how Alsop portrayed Jewitt. As mentioned above, the Narrative begins with a description of Jewitt's early life. He is characterized as musically gifted, bright, and socially adept. Although Jewitt's father was a blacksmith, he provided his son with extensive education preparatory to an apprenticeship as a surgeon. Jewitt then, is described as convincing his father to allow him to follow his footsteps and become a blacksmith. The result is that although Jewitt is a blacksmith, he is well-educated and literate. This excellent education coupled with his musical talent make Jewitt something of a renaissance man. Not only does this introduction closely parallel the opening passages of *Robinson Crusoe*, where the reader learns about Crusoe's early life, it also parallels the way Alsop's biographer presents Alsop's own early life. Alsop's protagonist is endowed with what Alsop viewed as appropriate class, education and ideals.

Jewitt's role in the Narrative is constructed in a very different way than in the Journal. No longer is Jewitt a slave occupied with menial drudgery. In the Narrative he has become a valued assistant of Chief Maquinna:

The King finding I was desirous of learning their language, was much delighted and took great pleasure in conversing with me. On one of these occasions, he explained to me his reasons for cutting off our ship.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Narrative, after Jewitt's crewmates have been killed, he is welcomed into the village and fed: "the king then seated me by him and ordered his women to bring him something to eat."<sup>11</sup> No mention is made of any arduous tasks demanded of him until the last half of the Narrative, when Jewitt says, "both Thompson and myself being

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<sup>10</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 61.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

obliged, in addition to our other employment, to perform the laborious tasks of cutting and collecting fuel.” This reference to arduous tasks is somewhat anomalous, as most of the Narrative is taken up with descriptions of Jewitt accompanying the Chief on fishing trips or hunting trips or on visits to other villages. Alsop even describes an incident where Maquinna asked for Jewitt’s advice regarding an “insane” person, and then followed it.

Maquina asked me what was done in my country in similar cases. I told him that such persons were closely confined, and sometimes tied up and whipped in order to make them better. After pondering for some time, he said that he should...be whipped.<sup>12</sup>

This depiction of Jewitt as a valued member of Nuu-chah-nulth society is unique to the Narrative. Throughout the Journal, almost daily entries detail the hard labor that Jewitt and Thompson were forced to perform and Maquinna’s periodic harsh treatment of his slave. In the Narrative, after complaining about the hard labor Jewitt continues, “we were nevertheless treated at times with much kindness by Maquinna.”

The changed status of Jewitt in the Narrative relates to the new author’s class beliefs as well as his role as a ghost writer. Richard Alsop may have seen much to admire in the rigid social hierarchy of Nuu-chah-nulth society. His support for the notion of aristocracy, and his desire to create a protagonist worthy of the attention of the leisured leading classes would preclude his portraying Jewitt as a slave. Far more appropriate to his literary needs and expectations was a Jewitt who served “King” Maquinna as a trusted assistant and fellow noble. As MacLaren explained, the “elevation” of the narrator was a key device of ghost writers of the day and was applied to both the narrator’s persona and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 70.

language.<sup>13</sup> As a favoured servant rather than slave, Jewitt's observations reflected his elevated vantage point,

It may perhaps be as well in this place to give a description of Nootka, some accounts of the tribes who were accustomed to visit us, and the manners and customs of the people, as far as I hitherto had an opportunity of observing them.<sup>14</sup>

The above passage conveys the impression that Jewitt was a detached and interested observer who could impart information about the "Nootka" objectively.

Departing still further from the Journal, the Narrative describes Jewitt as taking part in a raid against another village and being rewarded with slaves of his own. Not only is this incident noticeably absent from the Journal, it is also further evidence of the stark contrast between the Journal's depiction of Jewitt as a slave and the Narrative's presentation of Jewitt as an assistant to Maquinna. As Jewitt explains in the Narrative, "none but the king and chiefs have slaves, the common people being prevented from holding them either from their inability to purchase them, or as I am inclined to think from its being considered as the privilege of the former alone to have them."<sup>15</sup> That Jewitt would be given slaves by Chief Maquinna indicates that his status in the Narrative is far removed from that of a mere slave. The absence of this incident from Jewitt's Journal, along with the abundance of evidence from the Journal that Jewitt was indeed a slave, and even the Narrative's reluctant acquiescence that Jewitt indeed did *some* menial tasks, would suggest that Jewitt's changed status was a literary creation of Alsop. His re-creation of Jewitt as a noble in Nuu-chah-nulth society was done partially to fulfill his

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<sup>13</sup> MacLaren, 41-68.

<sup>14</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 33.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

own aristocratic ideals, and perhaps those of his expected readers. This dramatic change in Jewitt's station further supports the idea that Alsop was creating the Narrative for an established audience who would have wanted to see a heroic protagonist of a social class similar to their own.

The slave raiding incident also presents a different conception of manhood from the Journal. Although Alsop cannot be seen as representative of most American men in the late eighteenth century, he does rely upon some dominant American ideas about manliness in his time. As one scholar explains, "in the late eighteenth century, as men were using *manliness* with new meanings, they were also creating a new society based on the free expression of the traditional manly passions—assertiveness, ambition, avarice, lust for power."<sup>16</sup> While the Journal portrays an enslaved middle-class man grappling with a culture completely threatening and alien to him, the Narrative portrays Jewitt as Maquinna's personal assistant - confident, individualistic, bold and in control of his destiny at times.

Alsop's construction of Jewitt as a hero and an archetypal manly man of feeling partially fulfills literary conventions and partially reinforces hegemonic ideals of American manhood. He describes Jewitt as behaving heroically and bravely in nearly all situations. In the face of almost certain death, moments after his fellow crewmates had been killed, Jewitt resolutely says, "I now thought my last moment had come, and recommended my soul to my Maker."<sup>17</sup> Facing death, Alsop's Jewitt is tough and calm.

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<sup>16</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo, American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era, (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 20.

There are no depictions of shaking knees. When Jewitt learns that his co-captive Thompson is to be killed, Jewitt calmly responds by pretending that Thompson is his father. This tactic, again executed without fear, saves Thompson's life. Alsop's account of Jewitt's heroic actions is in keeping with the ideals of manhood that were widely espoused at this time in America. Indeed, constructing Jewitt as a manly hero required that Alsop omit the incident included in the Journal in which an unnamed Nuu-chah-nulth man saves Jewitt from drowning. Gone too, are Jewitt's concerns about becoming "enfeebled" by the cold or the harsh conditions. This Jewitt does not suffer from hunger nearly as ungraciously as does the Jewitt of the Journal. The hero of Alsop's Narrative could not behave in such an unmanly way. This depiction of acceptable manhood does not include real concerns for cold, or harsh conditions. Harsh conditions are to be tolerated.

Alsop's construction of Jewitt as a heroic man of sensibility also extends to his behavior toward others. Throughout the Narrative, Jewitt appears as Thompson's protector. Many times Thompson was to be killed for his inappropriate behavior, and every time Jewitt stepped in and saved the day. In one incident, Thompson struck a Nuu-chah-nulth Chief's son for knocking him over and making him spill the oil he was carrying. Because of the grave nature of this action, the Nuu-chah-nulth clamored for Thompson's death. However Jewitt saved Thompson's skin by mediating in the dispute. As the Narrative explains:

I however interceded so strenuously with Maquinna, for his life, telling him that if my father was killed, I was determined not to survive him, that he refused to deliver him up to the vengeance of his people saying, that for

John's sake they must consent to let him live.<sup>18</sup>

The above passage illustrates Jewitt as a man of sensibility, as he demonstrates a “hair-trigger responsiveness to another person’s distresses and joys,”<sup>19</sup> and intense emotional responsiveness.

The heroic Jewitt of the Narrative also differs from the Journal in that he is a far more good natured captive. This Jewitt seems to see his captivity as a test of his endurance to be met head on. The Jewitt created by Alsop is far happier and more cheerful than his counterpart:

I had determined from the first of my capture to adopt a conciliating conduct towards them, and conform myself, as far as was in my power, to their customs and mode of thinking,...I sought to gain their good will by always endeavoring to assume a cheerful countenance, appearing pleased by their sports and buffoon tricks, making little ornaments for the wives and children of the chiefs by which means I became quite a favorite with them...<sup>20</sup>

Alsop’s decision to construct Jewitt as a cheerful captive may relate to conceptions of manhood. At a time when “people believed that a man could now advance as far as his own work and talents would take him,”<sup>21</sup> Jewitt’s response to captivity seems manly and appropriate. Facing a challenge, Jewitt’s response would be a confident and individualistic decision to meet it head on. As master of his own fate, Alsop’s Jewitt seems confident that he can shape his situation, in much the same way as Alsop shaped his fate after his father died.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>19</sup> M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, (Toronto: Harcourt and Brace College Publishers, 1993), 190.

<sup>20</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger., 31.

<sup>21</sup> Rotundo, 18.

Jewitt's cheerful countenance is further attested to by his popularity when visiting other groups, and among the "nobles" in particular. This popularity is in keeping with Alsop's construction of Jewitt as a protagonist. Not only is he represented as likable to the reader, he is presented as popular among his captors. That Jewitt's captors are easily won over also reinforces hegemonic American ideas about the inferiority of indigenous peoples. "By pursuing this conciliatory plan, so far did I gain the good will of the savages, particularly the chiefs, that I scarcely ever failed experiencing kind treatment from them."<sup>22</sup> Jewitt's ability to win the Nuu-chah-nulth over and become a "favorite with them" demonstrates how Alsop created Jewitt as a man capable of altering his fate. By confidently taking action, Jewitt was able to make the most of his situation.

Jewitt's congeniality and sociability noticeably does not extend to slaves or lower ranking Natives. Jewitt is only presented as mingling and befriending Nuu-chah-nulth whom he identifies as "princes and chiefs," again reiterating Alsop's aristocratic pretensions and class bias.<sup>23</sup> Indeed referring to higher status Nuu-chah-nulth as princesses and princes illustrates his desire to reinforce any status distinctions that may exist in Nuu-chah-nulth society, and to interpret them in terms of European hierarchies, thereby misrepresenting them. Throughout the Narrative, Jewitt also called Maquinna the "king." This system of nomenclature may be a convention used by Alsop to make the Nuu-chah-nulth fit into a European value system or frame of reference to which his

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<sup>22</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 31.

<sup>23</sup> According to Mary Louise Pratt, "the colonized heroes of European sentimental literature are rarely "pure" non-whites or "real" slaves," they are more often princes or princesses.

readers can relate. Or it may be that Alsop misunderstood Jewitt's explanation of the Nuu-chah-nulth social system and system of governance.

Jewitt's close relations with Nuu-chah-nulth of higher rank emphasize that for Alsop the most important point of difference is class rather than race. Alsop's perception of at least high-ranking Nuu-chah-nulth as noble savages allows Jewitt to interact with these people almost as equals. As in the Journal, his distaste for lower ranking Nuu-chah-nulth is portrayed by his dismissal of them and his failure to call any by name. Lower-ranking Nuu-chah-nulth and slaves are indistinguishable as they are presented as an unnamed mass as in the Journal. Alsop racializes lower-ranking Nuu-chah-nulth, and at the same time excuses Nuu-chah-nulth of higher rank as exceptional. When Jewitt was treated badly it was usually "abuse from the common people, when Maquinna or some of the chiefs were not around."<sup>24</sup> While Jewitt complained of Nuu-chah-nulth commoners' "extreme filthiness," he noted that "Maquinna...was much neater both in his person and eating than were the others, as was likewise his queen."<sup>25</sup> Jewitt also noted that other chiefs "had much more the appearance of a civilized man,"<sup>26</sup> and that the complexions of higher class women were "fairer than that of the women in general."<sup>27</sup> That higher ranking Nuu-chah-nulth were described in this way, while Nuu-chah-nulth "commoners" were presented as an undistinguished mass further illustrates Alsop's aristocratic bias.

Not only does the John Jewitt of the Narrative mingle more freely with his captors, he does not have the same sober piousness evident in Jewitt's Journal. While

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<sup>24</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 74.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 56.

prayer is mentioned in the Narrative, it seems incidental. The quiet piety that resounds through Jewitt's Journal, is replaced by oaths to God and melodrama in the Narrative. Jewitt's intense concern for cleanliness, while not altogether absent, also seems lessened in the Narrative. The diligent dedication to his work, often laborious chores, so evident in the Journal is also absent. Alsop's Jewitt is not concerned with preserving middle-class Englishness instead he has different concerns. Ideals of manliness are radically altered in the Narrative. Instead of English middle-class manliness, the manliness to which Jewitt aspires in the Narrative is American, aristocratic and emotional.

Alsop's depiction of Jewitt does make cursory mention of concerns about cleanliness and prayer. However Jewitt's piety is somewhat altered as Jewitt's character in the Narrative admires assertiveness rather than meekness. Phrases like, "I determined," "I proposed," and "I at length succeeded," attest to Alsop's creation of Jewitt of an assertive, masculine hero.

Jewitt's co-captive reflects other facets of ideal American manliness in the early 1800s.<sup>28</sup> In many ways Thompson's character is a foil for Jewitt's man of sensibility character. Where Jewitt is presented as a man of feeling, Thompson's role in the Narrative is very much that of a man with unbridled aggression. Alsop's attitudes about aggression and manliness seem to be given full expression in Thompson's character. Though the Journal only mentions Thompson in passing, Thompson has a far larger role in the Narrative. Here, Thompson is described as an Indian hater. Yet Alsop's Jewitt speaks of Thompson's violence and bravery admiringly. During the raid that they took

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<sup>28</sup> Rotundo, 106.

part in, Jewitt remarked, “Thompson would have gladly put to death all the savages in the country,[but] he was too brave to think of attacking a sleeping enemy.”<sup>29</sup> In the same raid, Jewitt described Thompson’s actions:

as for Thompson, who thirsted for revenge, he had no wish to take any prisoners, but with his cutlass, the only weapon he would employ against them, succeeded in killing seven stout fellows who came to attack him, an act which obtained him great credit with Maquinna and the chiefs, who after this, held him in much higher estimation.<sup>30</sup>

Not only does Jewitt describe Thompson as brave, but then suggests that he was held in high esteem by the chiefs. Notably, Thompson only attacks those who are coming to attack him, and would only use his cutlass. Thompson’s manliness is securely constructed according to the model of the hegemonic American ideal of manliness in the Narrative. As Thompson declared at the outset of his captivity:

he never would submit to their insults, and that he had much rather be killed than be obliged to live among them, adding that he only wished he had a good vessel and some guns, and he would destroy the whole of the cursed race; for to a brave sailor like him, who had fought the French and Spaniards with glory, it was a punishment worse than death to be a slave to such a poor, ignorant, despicable set of beings.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, Alsop’s rendition of the raid constructs the Nuu-chah-nulth as cowardly. Their strategy of attacking sleeping people is condemned as cowardly by Thompson, the very antithesis of his manly ideal. Describing the Nuu-chah-nulth war strategy as cowardly was very much in keeping with American ideas of the time about

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<sup>29</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 78.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 31.

violence and warfare.<sup>32</sup> These ideas suggested that war should be fought with opponents who were equally armed and prepared; this was the crux of fighting “with glory.”<sup>33</sup> During the raid, Thompson’s manliness was presented as a foil for the cowardice or unmanliness of the Nuu-chah-nulth.

Alsop presents other incidents where the Nuu-chah-nulth are fearful, and Thompson manly. Throughout the Narrative, he depicts Nuu-chah-nulth “commoners” as often insulting Jewitt and Thompson. Finally, Jewitt and Thompson tell Maquinna about these insults. Maquinna expresses dismay and suggests that Jewitt and Thompson arm themselves. Jewitt explained one incident where, “according to custom [the Nuu-chah-nulth began] to insult” Thompson and himself. As Alsop wrote, Thompson “was highly incensed, and threatened the Indian with death if he repeated the offense, but [the Indian], in contempt of the threat, trampled upon the blanket...without further ceremony, Thompson cut off [the Indian’s] head.”<sup>34</sup> This bloody exchange, noticeably absent from the Journal, presents a Nuu-chah-nulth “commoner” as childishly trampling on a blanket, quite the opposite of manly.<sup>35</sup> Thompson, on the other hand, appears decisive and firm, again reiterating Alsop’s ideals of manliness.

Characterizing the Nuu-chah-nulth as childish is another way that Alsop portrays the Nuu-chah-nulth as unmanly. In the early 19th century American manhood was a matter of age, gender and class. Manly traits, like reason and emotional control were thought to be lacking in both women and boys. Boyishness “had to do with frivolous

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<sup>32</sup> Rotundo, 58.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>34</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 76.

<sup>35</sup> Rotundo, 25.

behavior, the lack of worthy aims, and the want of self-control.”<sup>36</sup> Alsop’s description of the Nuu-chah-nulth getting drunk is one instance where he seems to suggest that the Nuu-chah-nulth lacked self-control and indulged in frivolous behavior. “They all drank so freely of the rum, that in a short time, they became so extremely wild and frantic that Thompson and myself...thought it prudent to retire privately to the woods,”<sup>37</sup> wrote Jewitt on one occasion. Notably, Jewitt and Thompson “retire prudently.” When at Maquinna’s request, Thompson fired a cannon from the Boston, Alsop’s depiction of the Nuu-chah-nulth response reinforced characterizations of their behavior as boyish.

At the same moment the cannon was fired by Thompson, immediately on which they threw themselves back and began to roll and tumble in the sand as if they had been shot, when suddenly springing up they began a song of triumph and running backward and forward upon the shore, with the wildest gesticulations, boasted of their exploits and exhibited as trophies what they had taken from us.<sup>38</sup>

In the above passage, the Nuu-chah-nulth were portrayed by Alsop as tremulous, irresolute and uncontrolled. Songs of triumph, running backward and forward upon the shore, Alsop’s descriptions present the Nuu-chah-nulth as behaving childishly and inappropriately, reinforcing their unmanliness.

It was a short step in Alsop’s work from the boyish to the dandified. Alsop’s descriptions of Nuu-chah-nulth face painting practices construct Nuu-chah-nulth men as foppish. Jewitt observes in the Narrative, “though the women, as I have said make but little use of paint, the very reverse is the case with the men. In decorating their heads and faces they place their principal pride, and none of our most fashionable beaux, when

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>37</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 25.

preparing for a grand ball can be so particular...the manner in which they paint themselves frequently varies, according to the occasion, but it oftener is the mere dictate of whim.”<sup>39</sup> Describing face painting in such a way trivializes the ceremonial importance of this practice. Alsop’s description judges Nuu-chah-nulth face painting by what he viewed as emasculate vanity - preparations for a ball. Jewitt’s description presents the Nuu-chah-nulth as “dandified” and foppish.

Alsop’s class bias is evidenced by his focus in the Narrative on higher status Nuu-chah-nulth. Alsop seems to suggest that like European nobles, the Nuu-chah-nulth nobles were far superior to commoners. This view probably would not have been shared by John Jewitt. As a middle-class Englishman Jewitt probably would have been repulsed by the leisured indolence of the upper classes and would not have sought to parallel himself with any sort of upper class. In contrast, Alsop’s Jewitt details low status Nuu-chah-nulth as lazy, gluttonous, cruel, farcical, improvident, unclean, and as having disgusting eating practices. These harsh judgments about lower ranking Nuu-chah-nulth resemble the reprobation directed at European lower classes.<sup>40</sup> This class bias is further evidence that the John Jewitt of the Narrative is a creation of Alsop.

Alsop’s class bent is again manifested in his descriptions of women. Only cursory mention is made of lower status Nuu-chah-nulth women. Most of the women addressed in the Narrative are referred to as Indian “princesses” or chief’s wives. Jewitt is described as developing special friendships with certain “Indian princesses.” In the face

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>40</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire, Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* and the Colonial Order of Things. (London: Duke University Press, 1995), 124.

of threats from Maquinna, Jewitt is forced to take a wife in both his Narrative and Journal. However, the Journal offers few details about Jewitt's wife or his marriage. In the Narrative, Jewitt recounts being allowed to choose a wife that pleased him. Jewitt says, "Maquinna asked me if I saw any among the women who were present that I liked. I immediately pointed out to him a young girl of about seventeen, the daughter of *Upquesta*, the chief."<sup>41</sup> Jewitt's description of his new wife illustrates that her appropriateness is very much contingent on her similarity with Euroamerican women, and her social status. Jewitt's chosen mate is constructed very much in terms of appropriate femininity for women of this time.

I found my Indian princess both amiable and intelligent, for one whose limited sphere of observation must necessarily give rise to but a few ideas. She was extremely ready to agree to any thing that I proposed relative to our mode of living, was very attentive in keeping her garments and person neat and clean, and appeared in every respect, solicitous to please me...her person was small, but well-formed, as were her features, her complexion was, without exception fairer than any of the women, with considerable color in her cheeks, her hair long black, and much softer than is usual with them...while the expression of her countenance, indicated sweetness of temper and modesty.<sup>42</sup>

Also's creation of Jewitt's wife is very much in keeping with conventions of European sentimental literature, in which "the conventional facial sketch of the non-European love object distinguishes her or him from the stereotypic portraits of slaves and savages."<sup>43</sup>

Not only is Jewitt's wife depicted as fair and small, she is also accepting of Jewitt's authority over her. She is described as clean, malleable, intelligent but solicitous, the

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<sup>41</sup> Shurcliff and Ingelfinger, 80.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>43</sup> Pratt, 100.

perfect woman. This presentation of womanhood and marriage was also very much in line with American hegemonic ideals regarding feminine roles in the early 1800s.<sup>44</sup>

By setting John Jewitt's Narrative squarely within the conventions of the American captivity literature genre, Richard Alsop was acknowledging the American appetite for this type of literature. Jewitt's Narrative was first published in the United States in Middletown, Connecticut, and most of the other printings were as well. Based on this fact and on reviews, it is fair to say that the Narrative had a wide currency in the United States. While an edition of the Narrative was not published in Canada until 1987, the Narrative very likely had much earlier currency in Canada. An 1860 article in the Victoria Weekly Gazette entitled, "Legend of Nootka Sound" addresses Jewitt's captivity based on stories told to the author "by an old Indian."<sup>45</sup> An 1896 edition of Jewitt's Narrative was edited by Robert Brown, Commander of the 1st Vancouver Island Exploration Expedition. Edmond Meany, writing in 1940, cites the Library of His Honour Judge Howay, of New Westminster BC, and the British Columbia provincial library in Victoria as having the most complete collections of Jewitt's Narrative in existence. This would also suggest that the Narrative had achieved a readership in British Columbia.

While Jewitt's Narrative may not have been known in Canada outside of British Columbia, there may have been a market for this type of literature in Canada. However, when considering whether a similar appetite existed in the rest of the country, it is interesting to recall Alsop's frustrations with Jewitt: "if he had been a Yankee...I could

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<sup>44</sup> Rotundo, 106.

<sup>45</sup> Victoria Weekly Gazette. August 4, 1860.

have done much better.”<sup>46</sup> This comment may suggest that the captivity literature genre was unique to America, or at least that Americans had greater interest in the genre. On the other hand, it may simply suggest that as a young Englishman Jewitt was too retiring and not firm and “manly” enough for Alsop’s taste.

The wide appeal of Jewitt’s Narrative would have been due in no small part to the kinds of masculine and Indian figures presented. These constructions were very familiar to Alsop’s American readers, and reinforced existing hegemonic notions about gender, class and race. In keeping with a pre-existing literary genre, the Narrative presented no challenges to what people believed about aboriginal people, men and women. Jewitt’s Narrative bolstered accepted ideas about race, class and gender while also allowing people a taste of something exotic. High-ranking Aboriginal people were presented as noble savages, with non-aboriginal men presented as masculine and daring, and women - whatever their race - as submissive and solicitous. As Mary Louise Pratt explains, “survival literature [also] furnished a “safe” context for staging alternate, relativizing and taboo configurations of intercultural contact.”<sup>47</sup> These discussions of taboo intercultural contact were made safe by their publication. By publishing the account, the survivor was acknowledging that she had returned to “civilization.”

By addressing the Narrative within the context of a literary genre, I am not trying to dismiss its potential as an historical document. Rather, I am arguing that it be read critically as a story about Jewitt’s experience, but not as the whole story or the only story,

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<sup>46</sup> Harrington, 137.

<sup>47</sup> Pratt, 87.

as if such a thing is possible. The Narrative makes most sense when read as part of a literary genre and as the creation of a learned man with literary pretensions.

## Conclusion

When I began to explore the idea of examining a captivity narrative, the initial appeal of the project was that a captivity text could perhaps offer insights into aboriginal lives unrecorded, and often absent from our historical consciousness. However, the methodological approach which informed my research suggested that texts could never be the “perfect, unsubstitutable freestanding container of...meanings” that I hoped they could be. Nor could I legitimately delve beneath the European traces to find aboriginal voices. Instead, my methodology attempts to heed Greenblatt’s advice to “resist...the temptation to speak for or about the native cultures as if the mediation of the European representations were an incidental consideration, easily corrected for.”<sup>48</sup> My project accepts that “there are textual traces—a bewildering mass of them” to be examined.

With these ideas in mind, I examined the discourse of John Jewitt’s Journal and Narrative. Acknowledging the “bewildering mass of textual traces,” chapter two began by offering less known stories of the capture of the Boston alongside the Journal and Narrative accounts of the capture. The aim of this exercise was to unsettle the place of the Journal and more particularly, the Narrative, as the definitive account of Jewitt’s experience, and instead to suggest that no one or two sources can possibly be relied upon for the complete story. Chapter two aimed to illustrate the disparate, intersecting historical traces of the capture, and to demonstrate the evolutionary nature of texts.

While both Jewitt’s Narrative and Journal seem to have been perceived as texts that could be read as windows into Nuu-chah-nulth early contact life, his Narrative seems

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<sup>48</sup> Greenblatt, Marvelous Possessions, 7.

to have achieved hegemonic status as such. Chapters three and four explored the construction of Jewitt, and to a lesser degree, the Nuuchahnulth within the two works. Chapter three focused on the constructions within the Journal and illustrated that much of this work is focused on Jewitt's English middle-class aspirations and fears. While not denying the value of Jewitt's ethnographic observations, chapter three argued that the lens through which they were refracted must also be observed.

Chapter four looked to the second incarnation of Jewitt's story, his ghost-written Narrative. By placing his Narrative squarely within the existing American captivity literature genre, this chapter illustrates that the Jewitt of the Narrative was also very much a product of its author's own beliefs and aspirations. The aim of this thesis has been to unsettle the privileged space that the Narrative has occupied, and to argue instead that the "textual traces" should be explored. By specifically examining how Jewitt was constructed in both texts, and to a lesser degree how the Nuuchahnulth were constructed, I have sought to offer a critical exploration of these texts.

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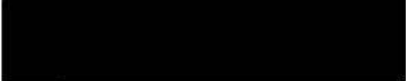
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